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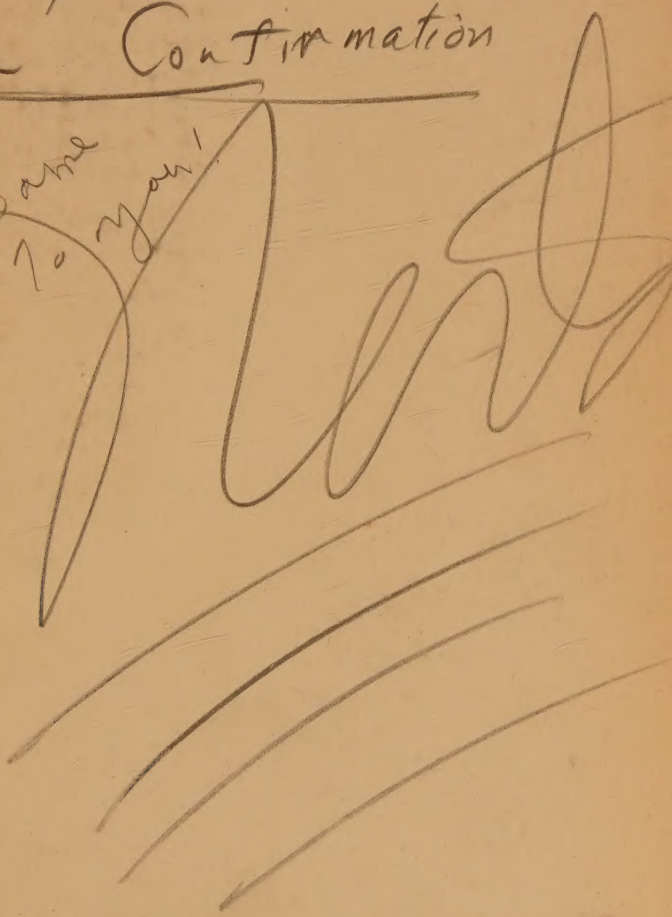

Jewish Post-Biblical History through Great Personalities

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Jewish Post-Biblical History

through

Great Personalities

From

Jochanan ben Zakkai

through

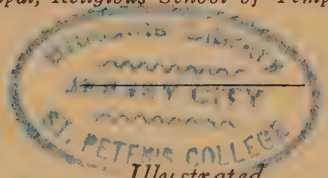
Moses Mendelssohn

By

Adele Bildersee, M. A.

Assistant Professor of English, Hunter College of the City of New York;

Principal, Religious School of Temple Beth-El



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TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY FATHER

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PREFACE

This little book, as any one with even the slightest knowledge of Jewish history and literature will readily see, is in no sense original. It is little more than a compilation of the better-known works on Jewish life and letters in post-Biblical times. If, then, one asks why such a book should be written at all, the answer is that the writer, in many years of experience as a teacher, has found no work on this subject suitable for practical use in the classroom. The books that glow with all the pageantry of history and with the color of a delightful style are lacking, from the point of view of the classroom, in analysis of material and system in presenting facts. The books that display scholarly erudition pile up details to the bewilderment of the average pupil.

Accordingly in this book the effort has been to select from the pages of post-Biblical Jewish history the outstanding personalities; to present the life and work of each in such a way as to illustrate the spirit of Judaism in his time; in doing this, to analyze and systematize the complex and abstract subject-matter so that it may offer the fewest difficulties to the pupil's mind; and yet not to sacrifice the warm human interest that should transfigure even the barest outline of "the grandest poem of all time—the history of the Jews." And throughout the history, from beginning to end, it has been the aim to bring out clearly the guiding principles of the Jewish spirit: the Law by which it lives, the hope of the Future towards which it works, and the conception of the universality of religion, in which it follows in the footsteps of its most sublime prophets.

With a very deep sense of gratitude the writer acknowledges her obligation to the Reverend Dr. Samuel Schulman

for the helpful criticism and invaluable suggestions, without which this undertaking would not have been possible. Her thanks are also due to the Board of Editors of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis for giving this work, through their careful revision of the manuscript, the benefit of their own great knowledge of Jewish history and Jewish literature. For valuable bibliographical suggestions she is indebted to the librarians in the Jewish Literature Room of the New York Public Library.

New York, March, 1918.

ADELE BILDERSEE.

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MAP

Europe and the Mediterranean Lands about 1190 ..... Frontispiece

JEWISH POST-BIBLICAL HISTORY

I.

JOCHANAN BEN ZAKKAI.

The year 70 of the present era saw the capital city of Jerusalem a smoking ruin, the Temple a heap of ashes. Those Jews who had not laid down their lives for their country in the unequal struggle with the mighty armies of Rome, lived to be the victims of an even unhappier fate. Many were massacred in the burning and pillage that followed the fall of the city. Many more were driven off to be sold in the slave markets of the world or to toil for Roman masters in unwholesome mines. Some died the prey of wild beasts or of gladiators in Roman amphitheatres. The once beautiful country of Judea lay desolate, almost without inhabitants. Now the conquerors divided it into lots to be sold to the highest bidder or to be given as the spoil of war to the Roman soldiers.

The Fate of the Jews after the Fall of Jerusalem.

Throughout the world the Jews were in despair. The great Jewish communities in Syria and Persia, in Egypt and in Babylon, the Jews in Rome and in Europe generally, who, until now, had turned reverently for instruction and guidance to Jerusalem, to the Temple, were overwhelmed with grief. The Sanhedrin, which had taught the principles of Judaism to all these scattered sons of Israel, had vanished with the fall of the Holy City. Nation, Temple, Sanhedrin gone, what was to become of Jews and Judaism?

The Effect on the Jews throughout the World.

Had the Jews been only a nation, like Assyria and Carthage, like these mighty peoples they would have been swept away. Had Judaism had no great message for the world, had its mission been already accomplished, there would have been no living spirit to carry on the ancient faith after this terrible catastrophe. But Israel had not only proud and tender memories of its glorious past; it had a passionate faith in its vision of the future. And there were at this critical period men who had the foresight to see, above the raging storm that swept their time, the star of this promise; who had the devoted courage to give their lives to the consecrated work of carrying on the Word of God to coming generations.

Israel's Faith in its Future

Foremost among these was Jochanan ben Zakkai. He had been a disciple of Hillel, and the gentle sage had valued so highly the character and the ability of his young pupil that he had called him, prophetically, "Father of Wisdom" and "Father of the Coming Generation." And indeed Hillel's love of peace and his devotion to study showed his disciple the way to follow. In Jerusalem, in the happier days before the fall, Jochanan had sat among the learned in council in the Sanhedrin, and had taught tirelessly in the shadow of the Temple all those who sought knowledge. Then had come the stormy days of revolt against Rome; and Jochanan, with his wise insight into the true strong places of his religion, had counseled peace. Israel had a far different task, he knew, from that of opposing violence to violence and combating Rome with force of arms. But in spite of the honor in which the people held him, they had not listened to him. With ever greater horror he had seen the inevitable Roman victory drawing nearer. Nearer came the day when holy city and sacred Temple would be lost. And, Zion gone, whence should come the Word of God?

Jochanan ben Zakkai.

That was the question Rabbi Jochanan pondered while the battering rams of the Romans were knocking at the gate. And to the wise teacher the answer had come that a refuge must be established for the Law; a place where men could think and teach must be found for the Word of God.

A Refuge for the Law.

To leave Jerusalem, however, was difficult. The hot-headed Zealots kept a suspicious watch, especially on those who were known to be of the peace party. Legend tells us that out of this difficulty, too, the rabbi found a way. One evening, at sunset, a coffin was carried to the city gate. The wary sentinels had misgivings as to whether they should let even a funeral train pass through. They threatened, it is said, to run their swords through the coffin, so that they might be sure it harbored no living traitor. But the faithful friends of Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai cried out in horror against such an indignity to their honored burden, and the coffin was permitted to pass on unmolested. In it was Rabbi Jochanan, not dead but alive. Safely arrived without the city walls, he hastened to the Roman camp, to Vespasian.

Coin of Vespasian, commemorating the capture of Jerusalem.
(Bust of Vespasian. Captive Jewess.)

The general welcomed the teacher, whom he had heard of as an advocate of peace, and listened favorably to his petition. All the rabbi asked was the privilege of settling in the little town of Jamnia, there to exercise his profession of teaching. The Roman freely granted the modest petition, not for a moment suspecting that thereby he was

insuring continued life to the people whom he sought to crush.

The "Vineyard" at Jamnia.

At Jamnia, a village near the Mediterranean not far from Joppe, to which clung memories of the heroic days of the Maccabees, Jochanan, with his disciples, established their school. And here came the studious in great numbers; for the rabbi's learning was famous, his method of teaching was clear and simple, and his manner was modest, endearing him to the hearts of his pupils. "If you have learned much, do not boast of it; for that purpose were you created," he admonished his scholars. A kind heart seemed to him the noblest attribute of human nature. "What should a man endeavor most eagerly to attain?" he once asked his disciples. One suggested a genial manner; another, a loyal friend; the third, a good neighbor; the fourth, prudence and foresight; and the fifth, Eleazar, the rabbi's most promising pupil, a good heart. The last scholar had spoken the mind of the master, for the rabbi said, "I consider Rabbi Eleazar's judgment best, for in his answer all of yours are included."

Instead of the Temple, the Word of God.

Into this pleasant community of teacher and scholars came at last the sad tidings that Jerusalem had fallen, that the Temple was in flames. Jochanan and his disciples mourned as bitterly as though they had lost a loved one through death. But the great teacher did not abandon himself to inactive grief. He realized that Judaism was not bound up with the Temple, to perish with it. He taught the people that, although the service of sacrifice was at an end with the fall of the Temple, the service of love, the practice of deeds of loving-kindness, would take the place of the burnt-offerings. Was it not written, "Mercy I desire, not sacrifice?" The Word of God they still had—they would always have. To foster it should be their work henceforward. Thus did Jochanan ben Zakkai share the vision

of the prophets of a Judaism that should be a world-religion, not inseparably associated with any one place, however sacred, but spread freely over the whole earth. Comforted and inspired by him, the people faced the future more hopefully. The Temple gone, he showed them that the Law should take its place.

Coin of Titus, struck in Judea. (Bust of Titus. Victory writing on a shield.)

A Religious Center for the Jews of the World.

To him, too, after the enemy had left the country, came members of the Sanhedrin. And Rabbi Jochanan formed at Jamnia a sort of reconstructed Sanhedrin, with much of the authority and the power of the earlier council in Jerusalem. By this means Jamnia became the new religious center of the Jewish people. To it they now turned, as in the past they had to Jerusalem, for instruction in the Law, for guidance in perplexity. And in those troubled days many were the puzzling problems that the wise men in Jamnia had to solve. The Jews were trying to live their lives under conditions very different from those that had existed while the Temple still stood and Judea was a nation. The fall of the Temple made inevitable many new adjustments, many modifications of old, time-honored laws. Such changes as were necessary, Rabbi Jochanan made reverently, loyally clinging to everything that should keep sacred the memory of the beautiful Temple and all that it stood for. In this way Jochanan and his associates at Jamnia became the acknowledged spiritual leaders of the Jews throughout

the world, who willingly followed their decisions. And in this way, scattered though they were, the Jews of the world were united in thought and feeling—not a nation any longer, it is true, but a congregation—the congregation of Israel.

This unity of the dispersed Jews, so important, so well-nigh indispensable to the preservation of Judaism in times as dangerous as these, was one of the greatest achievements of Rabbi Jochanan. His other great service to Judaism was the fresh interest that he aroused in his school at Jamnia in the study and development of the Law. His knowledge included the whole range of Jewish learning. He knew well, not only the Bible itself, but also all that generations of teachers had said in explaining its verses and in interpreting them so as to make them a vital force in the life of each new period. He knew all the legal decisions of the Sanhedrin, all the modifications of old laws that changing conditions had necessitated. And all these details, all the commands, prohibitions, modifications, you must know, were unwritten, were handed by word of mouth from generation to generation, until they became a vast hoard of tradition treasured up in minds like that of Rabbi Jochanan. As he had learned them from Hillel, so he taught them to his pupils and pointed out to them how all were drawn from the written word in the Bible. He showed them thus how they themselves could apply the Law, as new conditions arose, and as changes became necessary.

Teacher of the Law

Nor did he confine his teaching to the Law of Moses and to the customs that tradition connected with it. He lectured, also, on the writings of the prophets and on the history of the Jewish nation. He examined with his scholars the great moral truths of Judaism and taught them its noblest lessons.

Other Activities.

Through all his teaching shone his character. Like his

master Hillel, he was a man of peace. No iron tool was to be used in erecting an altar, he was fond of explaining, because iron is the symbol of war, the material of the sword and the spear. The altar, on the contrary, is the symbol of peace and atonement. Religion's mission is peace. Peace alone furthers the salvation of man. It was these principles that had made him an advocate of peace in Jerusalem before the fall. It was this gentle and kindly disposition that made him, like Hillel, friendly with the heathen, whom the harsher Zealots despised.

Man of Peace.

As inspiring as his life had been, was the death of Jochanan ben Zakkai. His scholars, standing at his bedside, were astounded to find their courageous master depressed in the hour of death. "Light of Israel," they cried, "why do you weep?"

The Death of the Righteous.

"Not on account of death do I fear," answered the dying sage, "but because of having to appear before the Eternal Judge, whose righteousness is incorruptible."

Before he died, he blessed his disciples with these words: "May the fear of God influence your actions as much as the fear of man."

"What!" exclaimed the pupils doubtingly. "Fear God only as we fear His creatures?"

"Even so," was the reply. "You fear to do wrong in the presence of man. You are always in the presence of God. Therefore, fear Him as you fear your neighbors."

The death of the founder of the school at Jamnia was a sad blow. The remarkable titles given to the master by his disciples in the solemn conversation just before his death—Light of Israel, Pillar of the Sanctuary, Strong Hammer—show the veneration in which he was held. Yet the death of the teacher did not interrupt the study of the Law. From Jamnia went out new teachers. Other schools were established through-

The Palestinian Academies.

out Palestine, spreading the good work. These academies differed in many respects from the colleges of to-day. Usually they were housed in no stately buildings: the pupils met their master in some unpretentious dwelling. The teachers in these early academies did not receive a salary. To receive payment for instruction was considered wrong. A certain Rabbi Zadok expressed the attitude of all the teachers when he said: "Make not the study of the Law a crown for self-aggrandizement. Neither make it a hatchet with which to hew, for Hillel used to say, 'He who employs the crown of learning as a source of emolument, deprives himself of life'." So the instruction was entirely a labor of love, and was given, free of charge, to all who were willing to learn. And the students who came, eager for knowledge, were of all ages. They were not placed in graded classes; in fact, there was no prescribed course of study leading to a formal graduation. These scholars devoted all the years of their life to the pursuit of knowledge. In order that this study might not interfere, however, with other necessary activities, the academies were not in session at times of sowing and reaping; and at all other times, the principal hours of instruction were in the morning and the evening. Nor was the method of teaching like our method to-day. Instructors did not deliver lectures. Instead, a subject was announced, and teachers and pupils would discuss it together. In this way they would arrive at a satisfactory interpretation of difficult passages of Scripture, considering all traditional explanations and adding their own to the accumulating store. It was in schools such as this, in Jerusalem, that Hillel had studied, counting no suffering too great a fee to pay for the priceless boon of learning. Then Hillel himself had taught there, bringing the school to its greatest prominence. It was a school such as this that Rabbi Jochanan had established at Jamnia.

To this task of teaching the Law and deriving from it

new rulings to meet new needs, a long line of men of learning devoted themselves. These teachers we call Tannaim; indeed the name *tanna* is derived from an Aramaic word which means *to teach*. These scholars carried on the unbroken chain of tradition, pursuing the work of their great predecessor with self-sacrificing enthusiasm. However terrifying wars and persecutions were, the teachers went on with this task, so that even in the darkness of exile the Word of God should still be "a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their path."

The Tannaim: Teachers of the Law.

Suggestions for Further Reading.

Bacher: *Agada d. Tannaiten,* pp. 25-46.
Graetz: *Geschichte,* Vol. IV, p. 11 ff.
Graetz: *History of the Jews,* Vol. II, pp. 321-33.
Jewish Encyclopedia: Vol. VII, p. 214, Article *Johanan ben Zakkai.*
Mielziner, M.: *Introduction to the Talmud,* p. 7.
Schindler, S.: *Dissolving Views,* pp. 53-66.

II.

AKIBA.

Quiet after the Storm.

And so the Jews, in Palestine and throughout the lands where they were exiled, picked up again the threads of life, sadly scattered and tangled, but not broken, and wove anew the old pattern of faith set them by the divine Task-Master. Widely separated they were; poor, most of them, and despised by their conquerors: but the thought of their schools, where the sages were carrying on their religious and literary labors with dignity and devotion, kept up their self-esteem and fortified their spirit. The Sanhedrin united them all in a strong sense of the race and the religion that were theirs in common, in Rome as in Jerusalem. And Alexandria as well as Palestine revered the spiritual leader who sat with his colleagues in Jamnia, the Nasi, the Prince, as the Jews called him in loving loyalty. Thus they lived in comparative peace for some years after the fall of Jerusalem.

Clouds Again.

Their quiet, however, was again broken by persecution and oppression. Against the cruelties of Trajan and Hadrian the Jews of the Roman provinces rose in rebellion. The revolt spread to Palestine. So vigorous was the uprising that Hadrian turned to the problem of this dogged, freedom-loving race, and resolved to crush it once for all into complete submission. Like Antiochus, he determined to blot out this stubborn Jewish

religion: he would make Jerusalem a pagan city, and where the holy Temple had stood he would rear a heathen shrine. But the Jewish people, instead of being cowed by the menace of Rome, flared up in a passion of desperate rebellion that taxed even Hadrian's mighty powers. For years, in secret discontent, they had been storing arms, and now, in 132, they faced Hadrian, as, almost seventy years earlier, they had faced Titus.

Bar Cochba, "Son of a Star."

In the daring young soldier who came forward to lead them in this crisis, the Jews thought they had at last found a deliverer. In him they saw the redeemer who should free them from the intolerable tyranny of Rome and restore the kingdom of Israel. Many of the older and more sober of the nation hesitated and counseled prudence, but the people hailed as Bar Cochba,* "Son of a Star," this youth who inspired them with his splendid height and strength, his personal courage and soldierly ability. Even the great teacher, Rabbi Akiba, was convinced that here was the King, the Messiah. Around Bar Cochba's flag gathered half a million men. Against them Hadrian sent his legions—only to have them shattered and driven back. Like Judah the Maccabee, Bar Cochba led his enthusiastic army from victory to victory; fifty fortresses fell into his hands and a thousand villages. He stood in Jerusalem itself. Confident of the outcome of the war, he had coins, stamped with "For the Freedom of Israel," struck to commemorate his victory.

After Victory, Defeat.

Then Hadrian, seriously alarmed, summoned from distant Britain his most able general, Julius Severus. With the methods of Vespasian and Titus, Severus avoided open combat with the impetuous Jewish soldiers, resorting to siege rather than to attack. One

* "There shall come a star **(kokab)** out of Jacob who shall smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Seth." Numbers XXIV:17.

after the other, the fortresses guarding the frontier capitulated to him. At last Bethar, the strongest, alone remained. This fort Bar Cochba held for a year with stubborn resistance, desperately trying to cut his way through the besieging army. Against so brave an army with so brave a leader even the finest soldiers of the age were helpless. But within the walls of the beleaguered city there were accomplices of the enemy—starvation and treason. Through a subterranean passage, some Samaritans, it is said, led the Romans into the fortress. Then followed a carnage so awful that the Roman horses, we are told, waded to their nostrils in blood. More than a half million were slain by the sword, and thousands more perished by fire and starvation. Yet so great were the Roman losses that Hadrian, in his message to the Roman senate, is reported to have omitted the usual formula, "I and the army are well." It was in the year 135 that Bethar fell, on the ninth of Ab, Jewish tradition tells us, the day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple.

Bar Cochba did not survive the fall of the city. The embittered people, in their despair, called him now Bar Coziba, Son of a Falsehood, or the Deceiver, because he had disappointed their high hopes. And now Judea was again a dreary wilderness. Over what had been Jerusalem the ploughshare was passed, and upon the old foundations a Roman city arose. On the Temple mount was erected a shrine to Jupiter. Entrance into the sacred city was forbidden Jews on pain of death. Only on the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple, might they, on payment of a tax, approach Zion and mourn its fallen glory. Now began, indeed, an era of the most dire persecution. Hadrian, shrewder than Vespasian, realized that the strength of the Jews lay in their religion. Crush that, and their resistance would die out. In the schools, the teachers, the scholars, he saw the humble in-

Bar Coziba, "Son of a Lie."

struments of this power, and against these, accordingly, he directed his severest attacks. Like Antiochus, he forbade the study of the Law, and punished mercilessly those who tried to evade his decree. Those teachers who dared still to conduct schools were wrapped in the scrolls of their Law and set afire, or were torn to a slow death with sharp iron prongs. Every horrible torture that the most barbarous ingenuity could devise was used to break the spirit of Jewish resistance. Every Jewish observance was prohibited. Jews were cruelly flogged because they waved palm branches at the Succoth festival; they were crucified because they ate unleavened bread at the Passover table.

There were many who held nothing—comfort, safety, life itself—so dear as the preservation of their religion.

Akiba the Patriot.

Among them was Rabbi Akiba. It was not unknown to the Roman conqueror that Akiba had greeted Bar Cochba as the King, the Messiah, the Deliverer, and had urged on, with all his tremendous influence, the revolt against Rome.

It was not only on account of his ardent patriotism, however, that the Jews loved and revered Akiba; he was es-

The Shepherd-Scholar.

pecially dear to them because he was one of the people, poor, of lowly parentage. Tradition tells us that he had grown up ignorant, a humble shepherd tending the flocks of a rich citizen of Jerusalem. Then one day, he saw Rachel, the lovely daughter of his master, and the poor shepherd dared raise his eyes to the beautiful heiress. But she would become his wife only if he gained knowledge; and so, at her urging, he set himself to study. For love of his Rachel, he toiled as did Jacob of old. And while he was attending the lectures of the most famous rabbis in Palestine, she, cast off by her proud father because of her love for the ignorant shepherd, endured privation, actual want. The brave wife stood faithfully by her plodding husband, sacrificing even her wealth of hair—so the story

goes—that it might bring money to help him. "Bread with salt for hunger, water for thirst, and a hard board for bed" —this was the price at which wisdom was won. But won it was, and at last Akiba was recognized as the greatest teacher of his time. He returned now to Jerusalem, escorted by an enthusiastic following of admiring scholars. When Rachel, humbly clad, and haggard with want and toil, tried to reach his side, several of his pupils thought the woman presumptuous and sought to prevent her. But the master cried, "For what I am and for what you are, to this noble woman the thanks are due."

To this honored teacher the proud father-in-law was glad to give a cordial welcome. The days of hardship were over. But the riches and the honor that now came to Akiba did not change his attitude towards life. Modesty was a favorite theme with him. "Take thy place a few seats below thy rank until thou art bidden to take a higher place; for it is better that they should say to thee 'Come up higher' than that they should bid thee 'Go down lower'." Wealth he thought of only as laying upon him obligations for doing good. He who had in his poverty shared with those still poorer the bundle of straw that he had used for a bed, the hard crust that had been his daily fare, now shared with others his plenty. Above all earthly wealth and pleasure he still held the study of the Law of God. With such single-mindedness did he meditate upon it that one Seder night, our Haggadah tells us, he discussed the departure from Egypt the whole night through, until his disciples came to tell him that it was time for the morning prayer. And zealous as was his learning, so deep was his faith in God. "What God doeth, He doeth for the best" was his favorite saying.

"His Delight is in the Law of the Lord."

Outside his circle of scholars and friends, what brought Akiba great fame was his researches in the Bible and his

explanations of its laws. He, together with others, pondered long over the question of what books should be included in the canon of the Scriptures, and what works should be rejected. He defended especially the Song of Songs, interpreting that lovely lyrical drama as an allegory descriptive of the relation of God to Israel, His bride. That the Bible might come correctly to the Greek-speaking Jews, without the errors and inaccuracies with which the Septuagint often distorted the meaning of the holy text, he led Aquila to make a new translation.*

His Researches in the Bible.

When Akiba turned from the written records of the Bible to the laws that had come down by word of mouth from generation to generation, he found them so scattered that they were almost unavailable for practical purposes. This wealth of traditional laws Akiba systematized and brought into methodical arrangement. More than this, he showed how, from the accumulated wisdom of the oral law, an inexhaustible number of new applications might be continually extracted. He saw, now that the Jewish state had been destroyed, that the intellectual and spiritual bond between the Jews must be made the means of keeping them together. The Bible alone could not constitute this bond, for the Christians too regarded it as a divine revelation. Akiba was convinced of the necessity of providing something that should counteract the influence of the non-Jewish world of Christian thought and Greek philosophy. As the Pharisees, amid similar dangers, had isolated themselves in their daily intercourse, so Akiba now sought to

His Development and Arrangement of the Traditional Laws.

* This Aquila, or Akylas as he is called in rabbinical literature, was a proselyte from paganism to Judaism. His Greek version of the Bible was practically a literal translation, a thorough and exact piece of work which delighted his Jewish teachers.

apply this idea of isolation to the intellectual life. He wanted to give the Jews something *Jewish* to think about. This he did by declaring his conviction that there is nothing superfluous in the Torah; that every peculiarity of diction, every separate word is to be considered as having a deeper meaning than meets the eye; that the full meaning of the inspired text will come out only as a result of loving and laborious study. In this minute examination of the written word he gave the Jewish mind an engrossing field for its activity. He also, like Hillel before him, did his part towards making the laws in the Bible capable of modification and amplification, so that they could be interpreted in the course of ages in accordance with the necessity of development in Judaism. In his development of the traditional material and in his orderly arrangement of it he showed his true genius.

This complete absorption in the study of the Law Akiba continued, even after Hadrian had forbidden it on pain of death. When a friend urged him to give up this dangerous activity, he answered, "Let me tell you a story. A fox, walking along the banks of a river, looked down in pity at the agonized struggles of the fish in the water.

"Our Element is the Torah."

" 'Why are you so restless?' he asked.

" 'We fear the hooks and the nets of the fishermen', they replied.

" 'Then come on land', he counseled them. 'We shall dwell together here in peace and security.'

" 'You foolish fox!' exclaimed the fish. 'Can you really be the wise animal you claim to be? If we are not safe in the element in which we live, how much greater will be our peril out of it!'

"Our element", continued the wise man, "is the Torah. If we forsake it, we destroy ourselves."

A short time thereafter, Rabbi Akiba was condemned to

die by torture. Unflinchingly, though suffering fiendish torment, he repeated the Shema, the declaration of the Unity of God. To the astonished questioning of his executioner, who asked whether he were indeed insensible to pain, he answered, "I feel the pain, but I have often promised in prayer to love my God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my might—which means even if they take my life. Now that my life is demanded of me, should I not rejoice that I am able to hallow the name of God publicly?"

Martyrdom.

So he died, and all Israel mourned the loss of the great man, so wise, so noble, so devout. They treasured his wise precepts, eternal truths compressed into a few brief words. One well-known saying gives a prominent place in Jewish doctrine to the thought that man has godlike qualities. Akiba said, "Beloved is man that he was created in the image of God; greater love was it that it was made known to him that he was created in the image of God, as it is said, 'In the image of God made He man'." Another saying touches on two great problems: it affirms God's Omniscience and, at the same time, man's freedom of will; and it reconciles two other apparent opposites, Mercy and Justice. "Everything is foreseen; and freewill is given. And the world is judged by grace, and everything is according to work." Thus the spirit that had animated Akiba by no means died with him. He had been a great teacher, and from his school many famous scholars had come. He pointed the way for Jewish thought to follow.

Important Sayings.

Rabbi Akiba. (From the Mantua Hagada 1560.)

Suggestions for Further Reading.

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III.

RABBI MEIR.

The favorite pupil of the great Akiba was Rabbi Meir, and his name, which means "One who Enlightens," is a true indication of his life and work. He was born somewhere in Asia Minor, at some time in the first half of the second century of the present era, possibly about 140. It is probable that he was the child of poor parents, for he was early obliged to seek his own livelihood. He was a studious lad who loved his books, and so he chose a calling that did not take him away from them. He became a scribe, and with skilled and loving hand copied the sacred books over and over. His faithful copying fixed them in his mind so firmly that in after years, when he found himself on the eve of the Feast of Purim in a little Jewish community where there was no copy of the Book of Esther, he was able to write out the entire book from memory without one mistake. But his repeated copying did not satisfy his keen desire for knowledge, his yearning for the wider culture that must be his if he were to realize his ambition of becoming a teacher in Israel. Accordingly he sought teachers, especially the great Akiba. And he soon became the favorite pupil of his master, who, on account of the youth's untiring industry, quick understanding, and clear, penetrating intellect, ordained him as rabbi before other and older disciples.

Early Life: Scribe and Scholar.

Into his work as rabbi, Meir threw himself with ardor and devotion. He established schools where he could carry on the work of his martyred master, and teach the Law with all the old explanations that had been handed down from one generation of scholars to the next, as well as the new interpretations that the rabbis of his own time were adding. He was a most interesting and successful teacher. Pupils flocked to him in great numbers from far and near. They admired his power of expressing himself concisely and to the point.

Rabbi and Teacher.

They enjoyed his method of enlivening his lectures with stories from his wide and varied knowledge of life and of literature, especially with legends and with fables, of which he told so many that he has been called the Jewish Aesop. He was particularly fond of telling stories in which the wily fox figured. Here is one of his fables, which is found also in the literature of other peoples:

The Jewish Aesop.

Once the fox persuaded the wolf to go with him to a Jewish farmhouse where he could regale himself with the good things that the careful housewife had prepared for the Sabbath. Scarcely, however, had the wolf made his appearance when the people of the house ran up with sticks and stones, and drove the poor wolf away. The wolf, in a rage, turned upon his false adviser, and would have killed him. But the fox artfully said, "It is not on your account that they beat you, but on account of your father, who once sneaked into this very farmyard and made away with the goodies."

"And must I suffer because of my father?" asked the wolf.

"Certainly", replied the fox. "Is it not written, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge'?"

Through this story Rabbi Meir teaches us that God

punishes the sinning children for their own sins; that he does not punish the innocent descendants of the wicked. It is the teaching of the prophet Ezekiel in opposition to the popular saying which the rabbi ironically puts into the mouth of the fox. For Ezekiel said: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

Many were the wise sayings of the teacher that his scholars treasured. We have, indeed, no fewer than 327 sayings which are definitely ascribed to him, and there are probably many more which do not bear his name. He would often express his love of God and his zeal to learn His ways: "Learn the ways of the Lord with your whole heart and your whole soul. Watch at the gates of the Law. Let the fear of the Lord be always before your eyes. Keep your tongue from evil words. Cleanse yourself and make yourself pure that you may stand without sin before the Lord, and He will be with you." He advised his pupils: "Have little business and be busied in the Torah." He vividly impressed upon parents their duty to give their children religious instruction: "God demanded of Israel hostages that he would keep the Law. Israel offered the Patriarchs; God rejected them. Israel offered the Prophets; God rejected them too. The children alone would God accept as hostages. Then did He impart His Law to Israel."

Wise Sayings.

Meir's varied experience of the world appears in his social maxims, such as "Love the friend who admonishes you, and hate the one who flatters you." He exalts work: he says, "It is not the trade followed but the merit of the workman which makes him rich or poor."

Rabbi Meir discouraged among his pupils any blind following of the words of even the most eminent sage. He

inspired the young men to individual investigation and research. He led them to think for themselves. "Look not to the vessel," he would say, "but to its contents. There are new vessels which are full of old wine, and there are old vessels which contain not even new wine." He introduced the rule of testing upon rational grounds the validity of each decision in the traditional Law. Indeed, so many were the arguments that he would marshal on both sides of a disputed question that it was difficult for the scholars to follow him and to discover his own personal opinion on the subject.

His Rational Testing of the Traditional Law.

So he worked, teaching and explaining the Law. And he continued also the labors of Akiba in arranging the rich treasures of the traditional Law according to their subjects, an important service to the generations that came after him.

His Arrangement of the Traditional Law.

All the virtues that he preached to his disciples his own life showed in daily practice. Although he was the foremost scholar of his time, he was always modest. "Be lowly in spirit to every man", he used to say. "Despise no one, high or low, for all men are equal before God." He was broad-minded and tolerant and lived on friendly terms with heathen scholars. Especially beautiful was his loyalty to a teacher of his, Elisha ben Abuyah, known in the Talmud by the name of Acher, the Other, in order to avoid the mention of the name he disgraced. When people reproached Meir for his tenderness to a man who had forsaken the religion of his fathers and derided its teachings, he replied, "Even when they err, the father does not deny his children." And so he continued to associate with the apostate and to derive much benefit from his great learning, while shunning his heretical views. "I take the kernel," Meir said, "but cast away the husk."

His Character: Modest, Loyal, Tolerant.

Particularly near to his heart were the needy, and they

felt his sympathy and realized that he understood and respected them, having himself grown up among the poor. And his wealthier neighbors were the more likely to follow his admonition to do good to those who needed it when they knew that the good rabbi himself gave to the poor, not only the tenth prescribed by the Law, but a full third of his entire income.

A Messenger of Peace and Comfort.

Often in the cruel persecutions that followed the failure of Bar Cochba's rebellion, he would urge the oppressed people to be patient in their suffering and to thank God for the evil as for the good. He was a man of peace and praised peace in eloquent words: "Great is peace; God has not created anything more beautiful." And Rabbi Meir did not know any greater pleasure than being able to reconcile those who had been at strife.

Beruriah: Her Scholarship.

Scarcely less famous than the great scholar himself was his wife, Beruriah. She was the daughter of a great teacher, and when scholars gathered at her father's house she listened eagerly to their words of wisdom. Thus she gained so thorough a knowledge of the Law that she excelled many of the scholars in learning. Her keen mind could unravel the most complicated problem, and her interpretations of the Law excited the admiration of the greatest teachers of her time. Indeed, one of them was worsted in a discussion with her and was obliged to admit that Beruriah was in the right.

Her Tenderness.

But her unusual intellectual attainments did not make Beruriah any the less tender-hearted and womanly. It grieved her to hear the wicked spoken of harshly. "Do not read the Scriptural text," she would say, "as if it were written that sinners should perish, but that *sin* should disappear. It is better to wish that sinners should repent than to pray for their destruction."

Her piety and her resignation in time of trouble have

made her conduct a model and her name a household word.

Her Piety and Resignation.

Much sorrow fell to her lot. Soon after her marriage to Rabbi Meir, the cruelty of the Romans rudely shattered the happiness of their peaceful little home. Her dearly beloved father, with nine other teachers of the Law, went to a martyr's death. The same fate befell her mother. And her only sister was carried off a captive to Rome. To save her sister, she besought her husband to undertake the dangerous task of going to Rome and endeavoring to free the prisoner, a perilous quest in which he was finally successful.

The Parable of the Precious Jewels.

At no time does Beruriah appear more truly the heroine than at the death of her two sons. On a Sabbath, when Rabbi Meir was at the synagogue, both children were suddenly stricken and died. When the father on his return asked for his sons, the mother bravely controlled her grief, and kept the tragic news from her husband until the sacred day was over. Then when the rabbi had pronounced the last benediction, the noble woman said, "Some time ago some precious jewels were entrusted to my safekeeping. Now the owner has come to claim them again. Must I give them back to him?"

"Can my wife ask such a question?" returned the rabbi gravely. "Can there be any question about returning to any one what is his own?"

"Oh, no," she answered. "But I did not care to let them go out of my keeping without your knowledge."

Thereupon she led him tenderly to the upper room where their children lay dead.

"My sons," cried the father in anguish. "My sons!" But Beruriah stifled her own grief to comfort the heart-broken man. "The Lord gave," she reverently murmured, "and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

"Blessed be the name of the Lord," the father was able to repeat with her.

Other misfortunes saddened the rabbi's last years. Shortly after the death of his sons, he lost his devoted wife.

Last Years and Death of Rabbi Meir.

His old age he was obliged to spend far from the scene of his beloved work, in Asia Minor; and there he died. "Bury me by the shore," he said to his pupils, "that the sea which washes the land of my fathers may also touch my bones."

The tribute to his greatness and his goodness was universal. All recognized in him the foremost teacher of the Law of his generation, the worthy follower of his master, Akiba. And of all the Tannaim, it is Rabbi Meir whose name is most widely known among the people. They remember gratefully his labors in the Law, his toleration and generosity, the quaint stories in which he set forth valuable moral lessons. And they cherish the memory of the helpmate whose name is coupled with his, the noble Beruriah, who was pious and submissive in the greatest sorrow that can come to a mother.

The Most Popular of the Tannaim.

Suggestions for Further Reading.

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Graetz: *History of the Jews,* Vol. II, p. 434 ff.
Jewish Encyclopedia: Vol. III, pp. 432-435, Article *Meir.*

IV.

JUDAH HA-NASI.

Hadrian left Judea a wilderness and, as he thought, Judaism crushed. But the courage of the martyrs inspired all Jews, and they applied themselves only the more steadfastly to their religion, following its precepts as devotedly in the dreary years that succeeded Bar Cochba's revolt as in the more peaceful times that came later, when emperors more humane than Hadrian ascended the throne. Their numbers were thinned by massacre, their activities impaired by persecution, but they labored with zeal and self-sacrifice to carry on uninterrupted the life of the spirit that had been left to them by their martyred brothers. The work begun by Jochanan ben Zakkai and carried on by Akiba and Rabbi Meir was taken up by new generations of scholars and teachers. These brave Tannaim were mostly humble workers—carpenters, tent-makers, weavers—leading full and active workaday lives in the community while they bent the powers of their mind to the interpretation of Holy Writ.

Workers and Scholars.

The greatest of them was Judah. According to tradition, he was born on the very day of Akiba's tragic death. He came of an illustrious family, tracing his ancestry back through a line of distinguished scholars, to the great Hillel himself. Hillel's grandson, Gamaliel I, had, like Hillel, paid great attention to study,

Judah ha-Nasi.

and had been the originator of many legal ordinances. His grandson in turn, Gamaliel II, had continued the work which Hillel had begun. He had had in view especially the abolition of old dissensions and the prevention of new quarrels. And now Judah, grandson of Gamaliel II, was following the tradition of his famous house. His father, Simon ben Gamaliel, was his first teacher, and he was also in close relation with most of the great pupils of Akiba, with Simeon ben Yochai and Eleazar ben Shammua, and especially with Jose ben Chalafta.

He spent his youth in study, learning the Law of Moses and the vast wealth of tradition that had accumulated about it. In time he succeeded his father as head of the Sanhedrin, leader of the Jews in Palestine; and in this position he enjoyed such authority and splendor that the title ha-Nasi, always given to the head of the Sanhedrin and hereditary in the family of Hillel for many generations, came to be applied to him with a special significance: he was indeed a Jewish prince. Living very simply himself, he used his great wealth to support poor students of the Law. Once during a famine he threw open the doors of his storehouses and distributed grain among the needy. So holy a life did he lead that men called him ha-Kadosh, the Holy, and so many pupils gathered about him that they called him also simply Rabbi, the Master. Yet so modest was he that he sums up his experience as scholar and teacher in the following words: "I have learned much from my masters, more from my colleagues than from my masters, and more from my pupils than from all the others."

The Traditional Law: Explanations.

It is by his work that we best know him. We have said that he was a student of the Law and with it of the tradition that had accumulated about it. For the Mosaic law had always had to be explained and amplified. The command "Ye shall dwell in booths", for example, seems at first clear and simple enough.

Begin to follow it, however, and questions at once arise. Does the "ye" mean men, women, and children? Does the "dwell" include eating and sleeping? Of what material are the booths to be made? How are they to be constructed? All such points as these were discussed and settled.

Then, too, you will remember that at every change in the circumstances of the people, at every development in the conditions under which they lived, new problems arose that were not to be solved simply by referring them to the old laws as they stood. Laws that had been admirably suited to an agricultural community living on its farm-land were found inadequate when the complicated processes of varied industries and of commerce came into the life of the people. In these perplexities where were the people to turn for guidance? With the wisdom of their faith, they knew. They knew that in the Torah they had a priceless heritage, a body of law founded on broadly humanitarian principles, sound and true and noble in every underlying motive. That was to be always the source and fountain-head of their instruction. All that they needed was a mind with the insight to seize upon the life-giving truth of the old, revered law and with the skill and tact to apply it to the complex conditions of more modern life. Thus the great Hillel had found, in his day, that one of the old laws was actually becoming a hardship to the people. This law decreed that in the Sabbatical year all debts were to be canceled. Now the men of wealth, at the approach of this year, were refusing to lend their money. It was not that they begrudged charity to the poor; this they freely gave. But when men came for means wherewith to finance large commercial ventures, why, thought the man with money, should I lend my hard-earned gold, when, in a year's time, I shall lose it? What, then, was to be done? Was the old law to be thrown aside as no longer of value? Hillel thought not. Look at the law

The Traditional Law: Modifications.

more closely. What is its underlying motive? The Bible tells that it was decreed in order that "Ye shall not therefore oppress one another." (Lev. xxv:17.) If, then, this law, so humane and beneficent in the older, simpler times, becomes oppressive in these later days, the sage, penetrating past its letter, will look to its spirit; and, holding fast to that as his guide, he will so modify the statute that its kindly impulse will still be obeyed. Thus Hillel had ruled that the creditor should give over the debt in writing to the court, so that the court might collect it. This was equally advantageous to the creditor, who was now able to collect his loan, and to the borrower, who found people no longer hestitating to advance him the money as the Sabbatical year approached.

To Hillel, too, is due the great service of formulating the first definite rules, by which new laws could be developed logically from the precepts in the Bible. These rules are seven in number and are as follows:

The Seven Rules of Hillel.

1. The inference from a less rigorous case to a more rigorous case, and vice versa.
2. The inference based upon analogy of language in the Scriptures.
3. The generalization from one special provision in the Scriptures.
4. The generalization based upon two special provisions in the Scriptures.
5. The inference based upon the relationship between general and particular terms.
6. The inference based upon the analogy established between two Scriptural passages.
7. The inference based upon the context of the verse.

These seven rules of Hillel were later expanded and other rules added.

A few illustrations will show how these methods were

applied. In the twenty-second chapter of Exodus, in the twelfth verse, provision is made that a man to whom a thing is entrusted for safe-keeping must make restitution in cases where the entrusted article is stolen. But what is to be done if the thing entrusted is lost? The rabbis decided that if the man had to make restitution for *theft,* which the greatest vigilance may not always prevent, how much more is he to make restitution for *loss,* when he must have been seriously deficient in the necessary care. Thus from a law rigorous in a matter of minor importance, the rabbis drew the inference that the same rigor is the more applicable to a matter of greater importance, even though the more serious case is not mentioned expressly in the Law.

Illustrations.

Again in the sixth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy the Law provides that "No man shall take the mill or the upper millstone as pledge; for he taketh a man's life to pledge." This law, as you see, is special, forbidding in cases of loans the taking as pledge of certain specified objects, the handmill and the millstone. The reason which the Law assigns for the prohibition, however, is general; by taking from the poor debtor these very necessary articles, you are depriving his family of the means of preparing their daily food. Hence the rabbis generalized from this law and made it prohibit the taking as pledge of everything which was used for preparing food. In a similar manner the special law "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together" was generalized so as to forbid also the yoking together of any other two animals of differing degrees of strength, the ox and the ass having been mentioned especially only because they were the animals ordinarily employed in farming in Palestine. And not only in plowing but also for any other purpose was it forbidden to yoke together animals differing in strength.

In this manner the leaders of the people drew from the

Biblical laws definite regulations to cover all cases which came before them. It was their endeavor always to show that these laws were founded upon a Biblical basis; and that, by the use of the same principles through which these laws had been formed, provision could always be made for new cases, however puzzling.

Such laws as these, then—all the interpretations, the modifications, the applications of old laws to new problems —accumulated in course of time to enormous proportions. From the time of Ezra the Scribe the work had been going on, from the time when he had gathered the people together and "they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense and caused them to understand the reading." Each generation learned the tradition from its fathers and taught it to its sons. It was a vast legacy that had become ingrained in the life of the people. But the time came when the memory of man, even the memory as it was trained in those days, could no longer hold the vast accumulation. Then, as we have seen, the sages tried to arrange and to classify it. First Hillel applied himself to the task. Then Rabbi Akiba took it up, but his activity was brought to an untimely end, leaving the tremendous work only begun. Rabbi Meir followed his great teacher. Finally it was Rabbi Judah who, about the year 200 of the present era, collected the whole traditional law. Taking the work of Akiba's school as a guide, basing his arrangement on the classification of Akiba and of Rabbi Meir, he gathered the mass of tradition, adding to it such decisions as he and his colleagues reached in doubtful cases. It was, of course, a colossal undertaking. All the scholars helped; all possible methods of collecting and compiling were used. This great work is called the Mishnah. This term, according to some scholars, is derived from the Hebrew verb *shana,* meaning "to teach" or "to repeat," and indicates that this work contains the *oral* teaching, instruc-

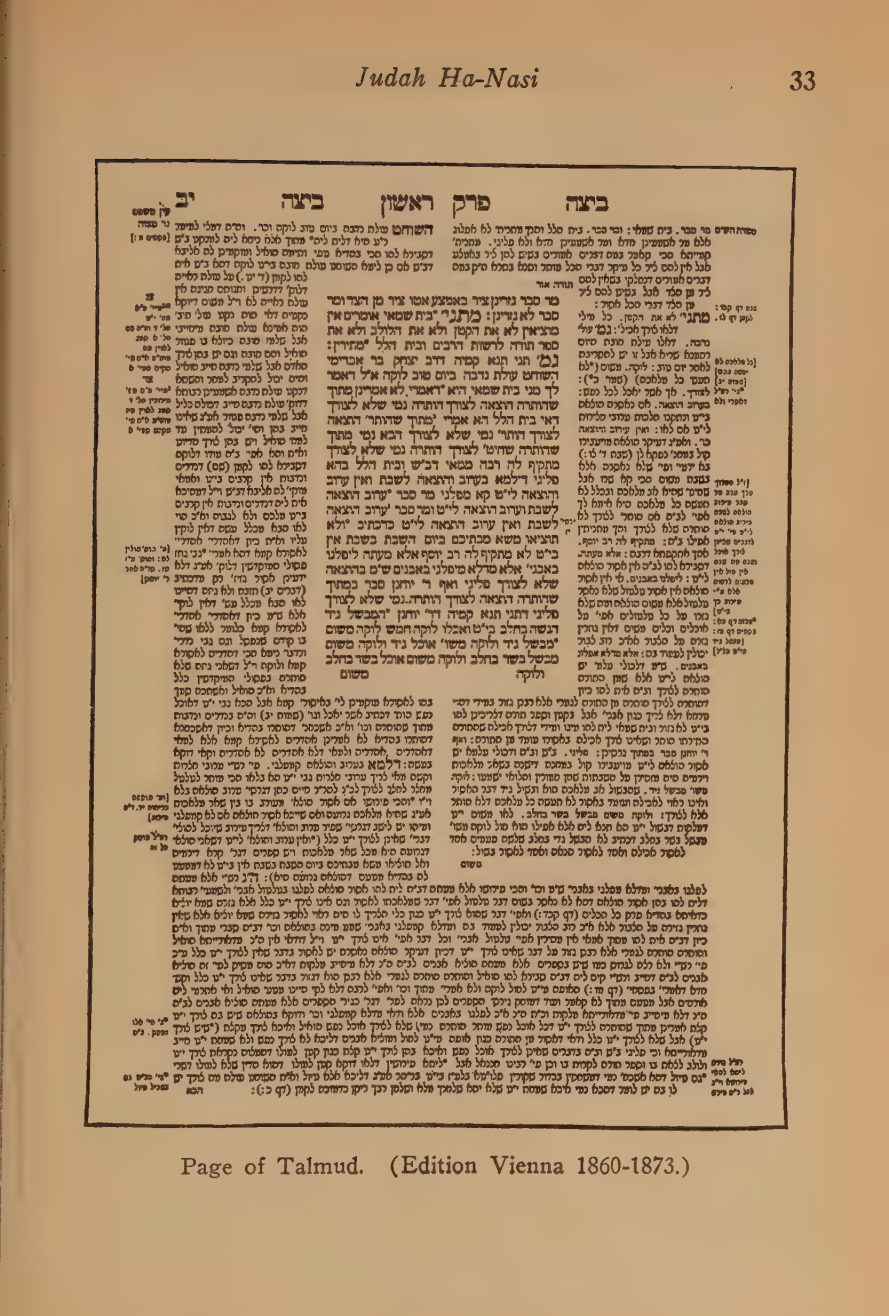
Compiler of the Mishnah.

tion in the traditional law *heard* from the teacher, in contrast with the *written* law, which one *reads* in the Bible.

The Mishnah is, as we have seen, strictly a code of law, and it was welcomed as the authoritative law book by the Jews throughout the world. According to its precepts they ordered their lives to the minutest detail; and well they could, for there is nothing that it does not include. It covers within its scope all the circumstances of human life—the religious duties of the individual, the arrangement of the liturgy, the rules for the observance of the Sabbath and the other holy days, the directions in relation to the sacrifices, the Temple worship, Levitical purity, the priesthood; marriage and divorce laws; laws concerning damages and injuries, found property, buying and selling, lending, hiring and renting, real estate, courts and their proceedings, the punishment of capital crimes. It is divided into six parts, each of which contains a number of treatises. The main divisions take their names from the subject of the majority of the treatises in them. The first, Seeds, contains the agricultural laws and also the benedictions; the second, Festivals, the laws concerning the holy days and the Sabbath; the third, Women, the laws concerning marriage and divorce; the fourth, Damages, the laws of property, chiefly those concerning compensation for injury; the fifth, Sacred Things, the rules concerning the sacrifices and the Temple services; the sixth, Purification, the regulations for purification after defilement. The fourth division, Damages, contains the best-known of the Mishnah treatises, the noble "Sayings of the Fathers."

The Mishnah.

For the Mishnah is more than a law book. Although it is engaged mainly with discussion of laws, it devotes much attention to ethics. Its inspiration is religious. Not only is one treatise, the "Sayings of the Fathers," exclusively occupied with ethical teaching, but the moral spirit pervades the whole.



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V.

THE MAKERS OF THE TALMUD.

Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi had compiled the Mishnah, and now the Jews, whenever they needed guidance in any matter, had a definite authority to which they could refer all their questions. Often, however, when they went to the Mishnah for instruction, they found its passages too concise to be perfectly clear. Accordingly the scholars had to explain the Mishnah to the people. In their academies they now studied the Mishnah as carefully and as zealously as the authors of the Mishnah had studied the Bible itself. They investigated the sources of its various rulings, the reasons that had led the Tannaim to their decisions. They compared similar laws, and reconciled laws that seemed to contradict each other. They applied the established principles of the Mishnah to new cases that had not yet been considered. Sometimes, too, the rulings recorded in the Mishnah aroused discussion; different scholars expressed differing opinions and were unable to come to an agreement. These sages who made the explanation of the Mishnah their lifework are called Amoraim, a term which may be translated as *Interpreters*. Like the Tannaim they did not stand aloof from the daily life of the community, but led busy lives as physicians, artisans, or even field-laborers. For about three hundred years, a long succession of these teachers interpreted the Mishnah until

The Amoraim: Interpreters of the Mishnah.

at last there had accumulated about the object of their study an enormous number of discussions, debates, and additional laws, far bulkier than the Mishnah itself.

This task of studying and interpreting the Mishnah went on in the schools of Palestine and Babylonia alike.

In the Palestinian Schools.

One of the Palestinian scholars who made a thorough examination of every part of the Mishnah and penetrated deeply into its meaning was Jochanan ben Nappaha. He had attended the lectures of Judah and had studied also under other great teachers. Jochanan was a man of agreeable presence and lovable personality. Many legends tell of his kindness to strangers as well as to his brethren, to the non-observant and to the pious, and especially to servants.

One day a former teacher of his noticed unusually large crowds hurrying in one direction On asking the reason for this great gathering, he was told that Jochanan ben Nappaha was to lecture at the college, and that all the people were flocking to hear him; whereupon the older man thanked God for permitting him to see his life's work bearing such blessed fruit.

To Jochanan's academy the students indeed came in large numbers. Scores of disciples went about the land teaching his decisions, and Jochanan himself visited and lectured at many places, so that his influence spread far and wide, and his name was on every lip.

In his study of the Mishnah he found contradictory rulings. These he endeavored to reconcile, and he laid down rules for final decision where two or more Tannaim entertained opposite opinions.

Jochanan kept up a correspondence with the teachers of the Babylonian schools. Indeed the teachers of the two lands were in constant communication, each profiting by the scholarship of the other.

This peaceful development, unfortunately, was inter-

rupted by a sad change in the condition of the Jews in Palestine. Here the Jews had long lived in security, even in prosperity. No sooner, however, did Rome become a Christian country, than the emperors, under the influence of the priests of the new religion, began to persecute the adherents of the older faith. In an effort to force all to embrace Christianity, they deprived the Jews of the rights they had hitherto enjoyed; they burdened them with heavy taxes; they interfered with their freedom of worship; in short, they humiliated them and oppressed them in every way. This persecution, which began with Constantine in the first half of the fourth century, forced many scholars to flee from Palestine to seek in Babylon the tranquility necessary for the pursuance of their studies. Thus the Palestinian schools lost teachers and pupils.

The Closing of the Schools in Palestine.

By the time, however, that the academies in Palestine were closing, Babylonia had already become a great center of Jewish activity and influence. This country had been a home for the Jews since the time when Nebuchadnezzar, leaving the holy city of Jerusalem in ruins and the beautiful land of Judea a desert waste, had led the conquered people into exile there.

Early History of the Jews in Babylonia.

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps on the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

This keen pain and bitter sense of loss had softened,

however, with the passing of time. Jeremiah had counseled the exiles: "Seek ye the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it." The Jews of Babylonia, accordingly, had soon grown into a flourishing community; and at last when Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, issued the decree permitting them to return to Palestine, so many had found a permanent home in Babylonia that, in spite of the general enthusiasm and intense joy which the edict aroused, the greater number had preferred to stay in this "second Land of Israel." From Babylon had come leaders in Israel—first Ezra and later Hillel. When Judea fell, in 70, many fugitives from the desolate land had sought their kinsmen in the East. Later persecutions in Palestine, particularly those connected with the Bar Cochba insurrection, had brought still more refugees. By the time, then, that the hostility of Christian Rome brought to an end the long and honorable activity of the Palestinian schools, there already existed in Babylon a great center of Jewish influence.

Here the Jews lived in peace. They were farmers, merchants, artisans. They enjoyed almost complete political independence, for they had gradually organized into a united community, with one of their own number as their leader, the Resh Galutha, as he was called, the Head of the Exile, the Prince of the Captivity. This official was chosen from among the descendants of the house of David, and so there clung to him some of the glamour of that royal line. He was the civil representative of the Jewish people. The Babylonian government recognized his authority; when he appeared at court, he occupied a prominent position among the high dignitaries of the state. He supervised the collection of the Jewish revenue, and he had the important power of appointing the judges. Great pomp and ceremony attended his installation. Unlike the Nasi

The Resh Galutha.

of Palestine, he was not necessarily a scholar, although he was often a man of great learning.

For spiritual and religious leadership, however, the Jews looked, not to the Prince of the Exile, but to the sages at the head of the great Babylonian academies at Nehardea, Sura, and Pumbeditha. Here as in Palestine the schools regarded the study of the Mishnah as their chief task. That there were such places of learning as these in Babylonia, where the work begun in Palestine could go on, was due largely to the efforts of two Babylonian Jews, Rab and Mar Samuel.

The Schools in Babylonia.

Rab's real name was Abba Areka, but so great a teacher was he that people referred to him almost always as Rab, the Master—just as they had called Judah only Rabbi. Rab had been a disciple of Judah, and from him and from other instructors he had gained so extraordinary a knowledge of the traditional lore that, when he returned to his native land, he became its foremost religious leader. Indeed the year of his return to Babylonia is recorded in the annals of the Babylonian schools as the starting-point of a new era in the development of Jewish thought and scholarship. It was at Nehardea that Rab first lectured, but he finally established a school of his own at Sura. So great was the renown of the teacher and so numerous were the hosts of pupils who came to him from all places where there were Jews, that Babylonia soon became the center of influence for the Jews all over the world.

Rab.

Rab took the Mishnah of Judah ha-Nasi as the text of his study, the foundation of his work. To it he added other traditions not incorporated in the Mishnah and from all of them he derived the interpretation and the practical application of the religious Law. This work his pupils continued, so that a great body of opinions upon the Law accumulated as a result of the labors of the great master and his disciples.

His Work with the Law.

Rab also exerted a great influence for good upon the moral condition of his people. Many of his sayings are recorded, rich in thoughts concerning the moral life:

His Moral Influence.

"It is well that people busy themselves with the study of the Law and the performance of charitable deeds, even when not entirely disinterested; for the habit of right-doing will finally make the intention pure."

"Whosoever hath not pity upon his fellowman is no child of Abraham."

"A father should never prefer one child above another; the example of Joseph shows what evil results may follow therefrom."

Rab was especially interested in the liturgy of the synagogue, and tradition credits him with the authorship of the lofty prayers for the New Year service, in which profound religious feeling and exalted thought are expressed in classically beautiful Hebrew. The first part of this prayer forms the close of every service, and in some adaptation or other these words must be familiar to every Jew:

His Interest in the Liturgy.

"May the time not be distant, O God, when Thy name shall be worshiped over all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. We fervently pray that the day may come upon which all men shall invoke thy name, when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the mind, nor idolatry blind the eyes, when all inhabitants of the earth shall perceive that to Thee alone every knee must bend and every tongue give homage. O may all, created in Thy image, recognize that they are brethren, so that they, one in spirit and one in fellowship, may be forever united before Thee. Then shall Thy kingdom be established on earth, and the word of Thine ancient seer be fulfilled: The Eternal alone shall rule forever and aye."

Rab lived a long life, blessed with prosperity and honor, and when he died the Jews of Babylonia mourned for him as though each had lost a father.

Rab's labors were shared by his friend and colleague, Samuel, generally known as Mar Samuel. He also was a pupil of Judah ha-Nasi and came back from Palestine to Babylonia with a great store of learning, which he imparted to eager scholars at the academy at Nehardea. Under his guidance this school entered upon a brilliant period. After the death of Rab it became the only college in Babylonia, and Samuel the highest authority among the Babylonian Jews, especially in matters pertaining to law.

Samuel.

Samuel was a modest man, gentle, unselfish, always ready to subordinate his own interest to the common good. It was a saying of his that "a man may never exclude himself from the community, but must seek his welfare in that of society." He was himself a useful member of society in many ways, not only as minister to the spiritual needs of his people, but also as a healer of the sick, for he was proficient in medicine. He was an astronomer, too, and followed the stars in their courses so zealously that he could say, "The paths of heaven are as familiar to me as the streets of Nehardea." His astronomical knowledge enabled him to establish a fixed calendar to guide the people as to the time of celebrating New Moon and Festivals. It was Samuel, moreover, who formulated the important principle that in all times and in all lands where Jews live, the civil law of the country is binding upon the Jews as a religious obligation. Thus, carrying on the teaching of Jeremiah, he made obedience to the law of the land a religious duty, and showed that Judaism and love of country should be inseparably connected.

His Varied Activities.

Samuel, like Rab, did much to make the Mishnah clear. Even Jochanan ben Nappacha in Palestine, who had at first

reserved the title Master for Rab, and who had been willing to call Samuel only Colleague—even he came to see that Samuel, too, was a Master in Israel.

His Work with the Mishnah.

Succeeding generations of scholars at Sura and Nehardea and at a new school in Pumbeditha carried on the study of the Mishnah. At the head of the academy at Sura from the middle of the fourth century past the first quarter of the fifth century was Ashi. He was still very young when he was honored with this high position, but his learning was so great that the older teachers acknowledged his supremacy. Under him the academy at Sura regained its old importance. He was a man, not only of scholarly standing, but of commanding personality. It was said of him that since the days of Judah ha-Nasi "learning and social distinction were never so united in one person as in Ashi."

Ashi.

Indeed his task was not unlike that of Judah. Together with his disciples and the scholars gathered in Sura, he applied himself to collecting and arranging all those explanations of the Mishnah that had been handed down since Judah had compiled it in Palestine about two hundred years earlier. And difficult as Rabbi Judah's task had been, Ashi's was still more complicated. He had, however, a marvelous memory in which were stored the accumulated treasures of two centuries; and he had the mental grasp and the power of analysis and classification that were necessary to systematize the bewildering wealth of material that he had collected. For more than half a century he labored, and when he died the stupendous work was still unfinished. Two succeeding generations worked at it with the same self-forgetting zeal. Next to Ashi, his disciple and successor, Rabina, had the greatest share in the compilation. Finally, about the year 500, the great work was completed by another president of the college in Sura, a second Rabina.

Rabina.

We call the collection Gemara, which means *Completion,* for it constitutes, as we have seen, a comprehensive supplement or appendix to the Mishnah, a great commentary on that text. Mishnah and Gemara together are known by the name of Talmud, a noun formed from a verb meaning *to teach,* and signifying, therefore, *Learning* or *Study.* This term was originally applied to the Gemara only; but it has become customary to use the word to cover the whole work—the Mishnah, or text, and the Gemara, or commentary.

The Palestinian Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud.

It is necessary to note, too, that the Gemara has come down to us in two forms, different in contents and in importance. Before the Palestinian schools had closed, they had made an effort to commit their intellectual treasures to writing, so that persecution could not rob the Jews that should come after them of their rightful heritage. In the fourth century, however, as we have already seen, they were forced to bring these labors to an end. Accordingly the Palestinian Talmud, or the Jerusalem Talmud as it is often less accurately called, is not nearly so large as the Talmud that was completed in the leisure and quiet of the Babylonian schools. The Babylonian Talmud has become of far greater importance, and is, indeed, the work that we usually have in mind when we speak of the Talmud.

Halachah and Haggadah.

As the Mishnah is a code of law, the Gemara, as commentary on it, contains, first and foremost, laws and comments on laws. This material is called Halachah, a term which comes from a Hebrew word meaning *to walk,* and which therefore signifies *the way to walk, the right path.* But the Gemara is far more than a law book. It contains matter far more inspiring to the mind of the average modern reader than legal reports and rulings. The Amoraim, in their classrooms in Palestine and in Babylon, often enlivened their discourse with some interesting

anecdote, some bit of history, some fable or parable or allegory intended to illustrate a moral truth. Then, too, because of the close relationship that existed in Talmudic times between life and literature, because of the fact that the scholars shared every interest of the people and found in the Law the germ of all mental activity, the Talmud draws within its scope all the varied branches of secular knowledge that were in existence at the time of its compilation—medicine and anatomy, botany, mathematics, and astronomy. All these passages, which are not Halachah—all this legend, history, ethics, secular knowledge—are called Haggadah, which means *that which is told, a popular tale,* and therefore indicates an individual utterance, with no claim to binding authority. The Halachah is the general law, accepted by all the people; the Haggadah is the expression of individual opinion, suggestive, stimulating, inspiring, but not necessarily authoritative.

Haggadah.

But although the Haggadah did not have the weight of the Halachah, it is in its way as precious a legacy. Special laws may lose their significance, for conditions change, and rulings practicable in Palestine or in Babylon in the third or fourth century, are not always applicable in Europe or in America in the twentieth century. The beautiful old sayings, however, expressing what each of the saintly rabbis of the ancient world had thought out for himself about God, and man, and the hope and the vision of the future, are as living a force for good to-day as they were fifteen hundred years ago. Each profound thought in the Haggadah has its individual personal message for the modern mind. One rabbi, for example, says: "God prays. He prays, 'May my mercy prevail over my justice'." This startling statement at once, by its very daring, challenges attention and provokes thought. By means of it the rabbi meant to make us ask ourselves the question: what, then, is prayer? Evidently, since one can think of God as

praying, it cannot be selfish petition for special favor. No, the prayer that the rabbi attributes to God answers our question. Prayer is an appeal to our higher nature. It is aspiration towards the perfect good. Now the form into which the rabbi put his thought we can accept or reject at will: it is not forced upon our belief. It has accomplished its purpose when it has made us speculate on the function of prayer. It is just one man's individual expression of the noble truth that prayer is a constant striving upward. And it is just such thoughts as this, ethically and spiritually uplifting, that make the Haggadah a source of continuous inspiration. Even if we do not ourselves go to the Talmud to read these sublime truths, they reach us and influence us through our preachers; we hear them in the sermons of our rabbis. Almost without conscious effort on our part, they become an important element of our religious life. For all time they are engraved upon the Jewish consciousness.

It was in the Haggadah that the great poet Heine found

> ". . . the beautiful old sagas,
> Legends dim, and angel-fables,
> Pious stories of the martyrs,
> Festal hymns and proverbs wise,
> And hyperboles the drollest,
> But withal so strong and burning
> With belief. . . ."

It is from the Haggadah that poets of other races than ours have drawn inspiration. Longfellow sings:

> "Have you read in the Talmud of old,
> In the legends the Rabbins have told
> Of the limitless realms of the air,
> Have you read it,—the marvelous story
> Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
> Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer?"

For although the Talmud was not compiled with a consciously literary purpose, the mystical tales of the Haggadah have all the sublimity of the highest poetry.

Men of science, too, go to the Talmud to-day for information about the history of civilization, because it was practically, as we have seen, an encyclopedia of secular knowledge as possessed by the Jew. And on account of its store of information on all subjects it has been through the ages a training school for the Jewish intellect. In the darkest periods we shall see the Jews, shut in upon their own resources and denied any outside culture, still, through their study of the Talmud, keeping their minds keen and active.

The Value and Significance of the Talmud.

But it is not in its historical or in its educational value that the true significance of the Talmud lies. More important by far, its sublime ethical and religious teaching fostered among the Jews a high standard of morality, which even constant humiliation and persecution could not lower. It held the sorely oppressed people true to the ideals of their faith. It inspired them with tales of the heroic history of their race; and by reminding them of all that they had in common, wherever they were scattered, it constituted a bond, keeping them united in thought and feeling.

Its Eventful History.

The Talmud has had almost as eventful a history as the people whose intellectual, moral, and religious life for the course of about eight centuries it represents. Enemies of Judaism have attacked it venomously, supporting their charges with disconnected passages which they have distorted to suit their own hostile purposes. Church and state have forbidden the Jews to study it, have confiscated it, and burned it. It is true that sometimes severity of persecution forced from some scholar in his anguish an utterance of passion. It is true that legends of wondrous beauty are found on the same page

with anecdotes that seem to us childish. It is true that the modern mind often wearies of minute discussions of problems that were brought up merely to exercise scholastic ingenuity in unraveling them. But these are defects that would be found in far greater number in the literature of any other nation for a period of one thousand years if it were bound together in one vast library. What we should find it hard to parallel in other literature would be, not the difficulties, the peculiarities, and the blemishes of the Talmud, but the noble teachings of the great sages on those fundamental questions which are the same in all ages, on man in his relation to the human race and to God, on love, and truth, and peace. And indeed even in the darkest times, enlightened Christians have had the honesty to appreciate its worth, and the courage, boldly, shoulder to shoulder with the despised Jews, to defend it against those who reviled it.

STORIES AND SAYINGS FROM THE TALMUD.

Consider three things and thou wilt never fall into sin: remember that there is above thee an Eye that sees all, an Ear that hears all, and a Hand that keeps a record of all thine actions.

Be not like servants, who serve their master for the sake of reward.

The ultimate end of all knowledge and wisdom is man's inner purification and the performance of good and noble deeds.

Great is the dignity of labor; it honors a man.

He who does not teach his son a handicraft neglects his duty as a parent.

To break a verbal agreement, though legally not binding, is a moral wrong.

The merit of charitable works is in proportion to the love with which they are practised.

Blessed is he who gives to the poor; twice blessed is he who accompanies his gift with kind, comforting words.

The noblest of all charities is enabling the poor to earn a livelihood.

Where children honor their parents, there God dwells, there He is honored.

Reverence mother and father by neither sitting in their seats nor standing in their places, by not interrupting their speech nor criticising their arguments, and by giving heed to their wishes.

To him who lacks nobility of heart, nobility of blood is of no avail.

The greatest of heroes is he who turns an enemy into a friend.

The world depends on the children in the school.

A single coin in a jar makes the most noise.

Judge not your neighbor until you stand in his place.

Go to sleep without supper, but rise without debt.

One should not partake of his own meal until his animals are first provided for.

It is sinful to hate, but noble to forgive.

As the ocean never freezes, so the gate of repentance is never closed.

Rather be persecuted than persecutor.

A rabbi had for sale a jewel for which he asked ten pieces of gold. Some merchants offered him five pieces, but the rabbi declined, and the merchants left him. Upon second consideration, the rabbi decided that he would let them have the jewel for five pieces.

The next day, as the rabbi was at prayer, the merchants returned. "Sir," said they, "we come to you again

in order to do business after all. Do you wish to part with the jewel for the price we offered you?" The rabbi made no reply. "Well," they continued, "do not be angry; we will add another two pieces." Still the rabbi remained silent. "Well, then, be it as you say," they said at length. "We will give you the ten pieces, the price you asked."

By this time the rabbi had ended his prayer, and he said to them: "Gentlemen, I was at prayer, and could not interrupt my devotions. As for the jewel, I had already resolved upon selling it at the price you offered me yesterday. If you pay me five pieces of gold, I shall be satisfied; more I can not take."

One day Abraham invited into his tent an old man, weary and travel-worn, who had been searching for his scattered herd of cattle. For his guest Abraham had a goodly feast prepared, but before they ate, Abraham invoked God's blessing. His guest, however, refused to join him in prayer, and, on being asked his reason, acknowledged that he was a fire-worshipper. Abraham, full of indignation, drove the man from his tent. As the man departed, an angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham and said: "The Lord has had patience with this ignorant man these seventy years; could you not have patiently suffered him for one night?"

So Abraham hastily recalled the old man, urged him to partake of the food that had been prepared, and sent out his young men to find the missing cattle. When they had returned with the cattle, he ordered them to assist the traveler to drive the herd home. At this the old man blessed Abraham and said that his kindness had made a believer of him, and that his heart, too, glowed now with the desire to be of service to his fellowmen.

Suggestions for Further Reading.

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VI.

ANAN BEN DAVID.

At the colleges in Babylonia scholars went on with the study of the Talmud. They added to it nothing essentially new; but they made clear and definite those points that had been left vague by the Amoraim, and they often decided which of two opinions under consideration was the more practical. Their work was really editing or revising the Talmud, and they are therefore given the name of Saboraim, which means revisers or critics. When they had finished their task, they left the Talmud in practically the form in which we have it today.

The Saboraim.

It was fortunate that the Babylonian Jews put their intellectual treasures in permanent form when they did; for no sooner had they completed their work with the Talmud than a succession of weak and incompetent kings followed one another on the Persian throne, and in the resulting lack of justice and order, the Jews in eastern lands suffered. Their schools were closed, and a Prince of the Captivity was hanged. This misrule continued until, in the seventh century, a remarkable man, with the establishment of a new religion, changed the history of both East and West.

Misrule in Babylon.

This man was Mohammed. He was born in the year 569 of the Christian era, in Mecca, Arabia. The Arabians among whom he lived were worshippers of the sun, the moon, the stars. Wells, trees, stones were regarded as sacred,

as containing a deity. Even before Mohammed's time, however, Arabian paganism had been in contact with other influences, Jewish, Persian, and Christian. Mohammed saw power, civilization, and learning associated with the monotheism of Judaism, the dualism of the Persian belief, and the trinitarianism of the Christians. Paganism was the religion only of ignorance and barbarism. In the light of Jewish and Christian teaching, the gross idolatry of Arabia became repulsive to Mohammed. The idea of abolishing it and substituting a purer, a more spiritual faith became his dominant purpose. He seems to have been especially impressed by the personality of the founders of the religious systems of the civilized world. He, too, aspired to occupy the position of mouthpiece of the Deity. God had sent a prophet, he thought, to each people: Moses was the prophet of the Jews; Jesus was the prophet of the Christians. Mohammed felt that he was not only the prophet sent to the Arabians; he was the "seal of the prophets," the last of the succession of divinely inspired leaders. That he was this, was and is one of the main articles of the Mohammedan faith.

Mohammed.

Mohammed thought that his mission was a restoration of the religion of Abraham, or, as the Arabs call him, Ibrahim. This religion of Mohammed is generally known as Islam, the name given to it by Mohammed himself, and meaning the submitting of oneself to God, for a complete submission to the will of God he considered the necessary condition of religious life. The participle of the same Arabic verb, *Muslim,* in English usually spelled Moslem, is the name given to the followers of Mohammed. As God had given to the Jews the Law and to the Christians the Gospels, so Mohammed believed that to him God revealed the Koran, the holy book of his faith. A study of the Koran shows an acquaintance with the teachings of Judaism and Christianity, but an imperfect acquaint-

Islam.

ance, for it was from his contemporaries that Mohammed gained his knowledge, from the common people who recited to him stories of the creation, the patriarchs, and the early kings and prophets.

The doctrine to which the Prophet himself assigned most value was the unity of God. This he set against the old idolatrous worship, and he emphasized it as against the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. "There is no God but Allah" is the first part of the Moslem creed. Fear of the judgment of God is a motive of action. Charity is enjoined as a duty. The efficacy of prayer is insisted upon. The Koran calls the Moslem to prayer five times a day. At first the worshiper faced Jerusalem, but later the direction was changed to Mecca. Absolute justice and sincerity are demanded.

"There is no God but Allah."

It will be seen that there is a strong tendency to good in Mohammed's religious precepts. His noblest principles he derived from Judaism. Unfortunately, however, in order to make these pure doctrines acceptable to the hostile Arabians, he compromised with paganism: he took over customs connected with the old heathen pilgrimage to the sacred Black Stone at Mecca, and he painted for the wild Arab soul a Moslem Paradise and a Moslem Hell with colors that seem to us very earthly, very material and sensual.

Relation to Judaism.

At first Mohammed and his followers worked in secret, so that when he did come forward publicly he was already the head of a devoted band. Of course he encountered violent opposition. Argument was succeeded by personal insult, and then by force. He was compelled to flee, and he chose as a refuge a place they now call Medina. The East dates its era from this Flight, this *Hegira*. There the Prophet's followers grew. At last he found himself the leader of a numerous sect, the mighty

Hegira.

ruler of victorious armies that were to shake the proudest empires of the world.

Coming as a prophet of the Israelitish God, Mohammed hoped to win over to his new religion the Jews of Arabia.

The Jews of Arabia: Samuel ibn Adiyah

Here the Jews had lived from a very early period. They were respected and liked by their neighbors, and by Mohammed's time they had formed themselves into communities that enjoyed no little prosperity and power. Perhaps the most famous of these Arabian Jews was Samuel ibn Adiyah, warrior and poet. At the beginning of the sixth century, Samuel was living like a prince in a strong castle upon a high hill. Like his Arab neighbors, he was able to shape his glorious adventures into song. With a warrior's vigor and courage he sang the high ideal of honor of the Jew. And no one had a better right than he to vindicate that honor; his life illustrates his song. One day there came to Samuel's castle an Arabian warrior-poet and prince of wide renown, seeking refuge from his enemies. He was hard pressed, his followers had abandoned him, and he had fled from tribe to tribe in fruitless quest of protection and support. At last men had told him to seek out the Jew, Samuel: no place was better fitted for refuge than Samuel's hilltop castle; no man was more faithful than the Jewish prince. Samuel received the fugitive with that hospitality which the Arabs hold high as a virtue, and sheltered him with faith and devotion.

Later the Arab left the protection of Samuel, to seek at the court of Justinian assistance to regain his lost power and possessions. Before he went, he entrusted to Samuel's keeping his daughter and his arms. He never returned. Arab tradition tells us that he was poisoned on his homeward journey by order of Justinian, who had listened to false accusations against him.

No sooner had he started on his journey, than his ene-

mies hastened to Samuel's castle and demanded the surrender of his armor. But Samuel would not be false to his trust, and so the enemy laid siege. The castle resisted their wild attacks. Then one day, Samuel's youngest son, venturing too far, fell into the hands of the enemy. The savage chief called upon the father to choose between giving up the armor and seeing his son killed. Samuel hesitated only a moment. Then he spoke: "My son has brothers, but my honor, once lost, can never be recovered." The enemy struck off the boy's head before the eyes of the unhappy father, and then withdrew, seeing that against such steadfastness all fighting would be in vain. It is no wonder that Samuel's fidelity to his promise, kept at such awful cost, won him the epithet "faithful," and that the incident gave rise to a saying still common among the Arabs, "as faithful as Samuel."

These Jews, although they were like the Arabs in manners and customs, were loyal to the religion of their fathers, and were united in spirit with their brothers in Babylonia. At first Mohammed sought to influence them with argument and persuasion. But he soon found that there was no possibility of compromise with the Jews on religious questions. It was then that he pressed his teachings with the sword. Exile and massacre made Arabia wholly Moslem. Thus Islam, the second religion to spring from the faith of Israel and to help in the great work of civilizing the world by spreading among the heathen the Jewish conception of one God, in Arabia, its home country, at first made life harder for the followers of the older faith.

Mohammed's Attitude towards the Jews.

Later, however, Mohammed found his policy of extermination very wasteful and unwise. He found it more practical to leave unbelievers in possession of their property, and to exact from them a fixed proportion as tribute. When the Moslems reached Babylonia, therefore, the Jews, suffer-

ing under misrule, welcomed the flag of the crescent with joy. The conquering Mohammedans restored to the Prince of the Captivity his old dignity and power. The schools were reopened, and to their head was given the honorable title of Gaon (plural, Gaonim), which means *Excellency*.

The Gaonim.

These Gaonim were recognized as spiritual and religious leaders, not only by Babylonian Jews, but by all Jews throughout the world. From all countries where Jews lived, scholars came to Sura and Pumbeditha there to study, under the guidance of the Gaonim, the literature of their fathers. From the remotest lands, too, came messengers with gifts for the support of the schools, and with questions for the Gaonim to answer. For it was to the Gaonim that the Jews referred all the problems that perplexed them in their social and religious life. In answering these questions, the Gaonim were carrying on the work of the long succession of sages: they were keeping the Jewish life of the day in harmony with the spirit of historical, traditional Judaism. Their decisions were reverently obeyed, and their answers were carefully preserved. These *Answers,* or *Responsa,* form indeed a considerable literature; they are clear and concise, and are in great part as fresh and vivid to-day as when, in those remote times, messengers brought them to waiting congregations.

In a Babylonian Academy.

It may interest you to know what went on within the walls of the schools over which the Gaonim presided so many centuries ago. Twice a year foreign scholars assembled in the colleges for common study. When the session opened, the Gaon faced seventy members of the academy. In the first rows sat the masters, and behind them the other members of the school. During the first three weeks of the month, the scholars seated in the first row reported on the Talmudic treatise that had been assigned them for their own special study during the preceding months. In the fourth week

the other scholars and also some of the pupils were called upon. Discussions followed, and especially difficult passages were laid before the Gaon. He also took a prominent part in the debates, and freely reproved any member of the college who fell below the prevailing standard of scholarship. At the end of the month the Gaon assigned the Talmudic treatises which the scholars were to study during the months before the next assembly. The students who were not given regular seats were exempt from these definite tasks, being free to choose for study any subject in which they were particularly interested.

The Kallah or Assembly.

During the spring assembly, the Gaon laid before the college every day a certain number of the questions that had been sent in during the year. The answers were discussed, and were finally recorded by the secretary according to the instructions of the Gaon. At the end of the month, questions and answers were read to the assembly, and the answers were signed by the Gaon. Many answers, however, the Gaonim wrote without consulting the assembly.

The remaining months of the year passed more quietly at the colleges. Many of the students lived in remote districts and appeared before the Gaonim only at the time of the assemblies. Those scholars who came to the college during the assembly months received support from a fund which was maintained by the gifts sent to the college. You can get an idea of the size of the colleges from the fact that during the tenth century the students numbered about four hundred. From these schools in Babylonia Jewish learning spread throughout the world.

In spite of this apparent unity, however, there were those who were dissatisfied with the methods of the colleges at Sura and Pumbeditha. They protested against the exclusive study of the oral law. Long before this the Sadducees had rejected all tradition, all rabbinical interpretation

and explanation, and had insisted on the letter of the Mosaic code of law. Now again, as in the days of the Sadducees, there came this reaction against the methods of the rabbis. And now it was strengthened because the Jews saw that among their Arabian neighbors the faithful adherents of the Koran were opposing the authority of the Mohammedan tradition that had grown up about their sacred book.

Opposition to the Methods of the Schools.

In the second half of the eighth century these discontented spirits in Israel found an energetic and determined leader in Anan ben David. Anan had expected to become Prince of the Captivity; but the Gaonim, in whose hands the power of appointment lay, had passed over him, and had chosen his younger brother. Embittered by this disappointment, Anan openly proclaimed his hostility to the rabbinical, Talmudical interpretation of the Scriptures. He ridiculed those Jews who followed the minutely detailed instructions of the rabbis with what he called blind obedience. Like the Sadducees, he claimed the right to cast aside all the interpretations that had come down through the ages and to go directly to the Bible as the only source of religious inspiration. His watchword was "Search diligently in the Scripture;" and his followers accordingly called themselves Karaites, בני מקרא *Followers of the Scripture.*

Anan ben David.

Now the laws of the Bible, tested in the crucible of centuries and found good, were, nevertheless, not always sufficiently detailed, as we have seen, for practical application to the needs of daily life. They had always to be explained, to be adapted to new conditions. The Karaites, in following literally the injunctions of the Bible and in discarding those traditions that represented the religious experience of their race through the ages, made the Biblical laws irksome and harsh in practice. The great sages, you will remember, had always, on

The Harshness of Karaism.

the contrary, tried so to interpret them as to make obedience to them a pleasure and not a grievous burden. On the Sabbath, for example, the Karaites would allow literally no work, not even the administering of medicine in cases of serious illness. And they abolished the celebration of our joyous Feast of Chanuka, because, naturally, they found no sanction for it in the Bible. From these instances you can see that Karaism was harsh and cold, that it lacked the warmth and humanity, the poetry and inspiration of traditional Judaism.

And yet its impulse was sound. Its criticism of the methods of the Babylonian schools was, in a measure, just.

Its Merits and its Defects.

Karaism was right when it asserted that the Talmudists, or the Rabbinites, as they were called, had made the study of the Talmud little more than a matter of memory. From this storing up and treasuring of voluminous, detailed commentaries it tried to rescue Judaism; it sought to restore to it the simplicity of the Bible itself. This aim was good; the method, however, that the Karaites used in furthering their aim was, as we have seen, hopelessly wrong. They should have devoted serious and reverent attention to those very traditions that they so ruthlessly discarded. Had Anan been a man of any philosophical insight into history, he would have realized that no religion can break with its past; that institutions sanctioned by the wisdom of generation after generation, customs endeared to the people by long and hallowed association, can not be lightly ignored. He would have realized that in ignoring the Talmud he was casting aside a truly progressive authority, a living force capable of growth and of adaptation to changing requirements, and substituting for it a method that was fixed, rigid, and unprogressive. Thus it was that Karaism, in spite of the fact that the principle upon which it was based was reasonable, performed no great constructive work for Judaism.

Indirectly, however, Karaism had a good effect upon Jewish thought and Jewish literature. To strengthen their position against the Rabbinites, the Karaites found it necessary to make a very close and careful examination of the text of the Bible. With this accurate study of the text went necessarily a new inquiry into the laws of Hebrew grammar. The Karaites accordingly compiled Hebrew grammars and wrote new commentaries on the Bible. The Rabbinites, in their turn, were aroused, and answered the Karaite attacks upon their methods; and in order to meet their opponents on their own ground they were compelled to justify their Talmudic laws by tracing them anew to the fundamental injunctions of the Pentateuch. This led the Rabbinites to an invigorating and inspiring study of the direct and simple laws of the Bible. And this renewed Bible study demanded of Rabbinite as well as of Karaite an accurate knowledge of Hebrew grammar. Thus there grew up a new method of dealing with the holy text, a more scientific method than that which the earlier commentators had followed.

Its Service to Methods of Study.

The Karaite sect itself—although it had aroused Judaism, although it had directed the attention of the scholars to the Bible and had prevented the study of the Talmud from becoming separated from its source, the Bible—was never of great importance. It still exists in the East, in obscure places in southern Russia, in Turkey, and in Egypt. The fact that the Karaites refuse intercourse with other Jews has, oddly enough, been the means whereby they have often escaped the cruel persecution that has been the lot of the Jew in Russia.

The Karaite Sect To-day.

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VII.

SAADIA.

The attacks of the Karaites were directed chiefly against the schools in Babylon. In these schools, the Gaonim at first thought that their best policy was to ignore the new sect. As time went on, however, alarmed by the continued activity of the Karaites and aroused by their attacks, the scholars came to a tardy realization of the necessity of answering this harsh criticism if they wished to retain their own authority in the eyes of the people. The Gaonim at this time, unfortunately, were not in touch with the thought of the day, and accordingly they were incapable of refuting their Karaite opponents. The attack on traditional Judaism therefore became more and more daring, and the new sect won an ever increasing number of converts. At the end of the ninth century, however, there came a change. The schools by this time had broadened their outlook and had included among their subjects of study, not only the Bible, but also Hebrew grammar and even natural science. This intellectual awakening now produced great scholars, among whom the most famous was Saadia.

The Intellectual Awakening of the Schools.

Like Philo, Saadia was born in Egypt, where there were also Jewish seats of learning. Because of his broad culture, his keen intellect, and his vigorous stand against Karaism, he attracted notice so widespread that Babylon learned of

him, and he was summoned to become Gaon of the school at Sura. It was principally as defender of rabbinical Judaism that he was called to the leadership of the school, and of all his writings it was his answers to the Karaites that exercised the greatest immediate influence. Saadia stood firmly for the Talmudic view that, besides the Bible, tradition is necessary for a proper understanding and development of Judaism. To the defense of this view he brought his broad culture—his thorough training, not only in departments of Jewish learning, but also in philosophical lore—and his untiring literary activity. He was thus able to defeat the Karaites on their own ground.

A Defender of Rabbinical Judaism.

Although Saadia was vigorously opposed to Karaism, he shared the Karaites' enthusiasm for the accurate study of the Bible and of the Hebrew language, and he gained supremacy for rabbinical Judaism in these very fields of learning which the Karaites had come to regard as their own special province. The Bible was the principal object of Saadia's unwearied mental activity. He saw with grief that the holy Book was not accessible to the majority of the people: for to the Jews of the East, Hebrew was no longer a familiar tongue; Arabic, the speech of the land, had become their only means of communication. To meet this difficulty, Saadia translated the Bible into Arabic, thereby performing a service of the utmost importance to Judaism, and not without influence outside Jewish circles. Saadia's Arabic translation gave Mohammedan as well as Jew an opportunity to become familiar with the Scriptures, and he thus brought the message of the Hebrew prophets to the Moslem world, as the Septuagint had earlier brought it to the Greek.

Translation of the Bible into Arabic.

To his translation of the Bible, Saadia added a commentary in Arabic. In addition to writing notes on individual passages that needed explanation, he commented

clearly and rationally on each book as a whole. In this way be hoped to remove all the misconceptions that had obscured the message of the Scriptures, and to make its meaning intelligible to every one.

A Rational Commentary on the Bible.

At the same time that Saadia wrote his translation of the Bible, he also composed a Hebrew grammar and a Hebrew dictionary. These works are important because they introduced grammar and philology as definite departments of rabbinical scholarship, and thus established a new method of Bible study, characterized by an accurate investigation of the text of the Bible and a scientific knowledge of its language,—a method that was to produce a long series of brilliant works in the era that was just opening.

A Hebrew Grammar and a Hebrew Dictionary.

Saadia's learning was many-sided: it included not only all branches of Jewish knowledge, but also the Arabian culture of his time. In breadth of culture he excelled all his Jewish contemporaries; yet he was not alone in responding to the influence of the intellectual Arabs. Inspired by them, many Jews were rapidly mastering the sciences and the Arabic version of Greek philosophy. Saadia saw with deep concern, however, that the result of these studies was sometimes unsettling—that many became perplexed by the new knowledge and began to waver in their allegiance to the old faith. For these doubters in Israel Saadia wrote his "Emunot ve-Deot", "Faith and Knowledge", in which he defended Judaism by attempting to prove that the fundamental truths of Bible and Talmud are not at variance with the moral laws reasoned out by the great philosophers, but are, on the contrary, in perfect harmony with them. In writing this book, he had in mind, too, a second class of readers. He wished to reach those conservative adherents of the methods of the old schools who condemned all philosophy and science, all inquiry into the great problems of the universe. To con-

"Faith and Knowledge."

vince these Jews that philosophy may work hand in hand with faith, that an independent search for knowledge should confirm, not weaken, religion, Saadia placed before them a survey of what the philosophy of his day had to say upon those themes that occupy the mind of man throughout all ages,—upon God, creation, the soul, death, resurrection, the Messiah.

Jewish Philosophers.

Beginning with this work of Saadia's, Jewish thinkers were now to produce a series of philosophical works representing every school of thought in the light of Jewish belief. In this, Saadia was very like Philo, who, so many years before, in Greek Alexandria, had endeavored to harmonize the differences between Greek philosophy and Jewish belief.

Saadia the Man.

As remarkable as Saadia's knowledge and literary power was his personality. His most striking traits were a deep moral earnestness and an unswerving rectitude of character. In a law-suit about a large inheritance, the Prince of the Exile, influenced by the prospect of great gain, gave an unjust decision. To ratify this decision he demanded the signature of the Gaonim. Saadia, unlike the subservient Gaon at Pumbeditha, steadfastly refused to countenance the injustice. To all arguments and threats he calmly replied, "Ye shall not respect persons in judgment". The infuriated Prince accordingly deprived Saadia of his office and forced him into retirement. Later, justice triumphed, and Saadia was restored to office. By his conduct towards the family of his old enemy he now showed that he could be merciful as well as just. Through his influence, the son of his oppressor succeeded his father as Prince, and later still Saadia received into his own home the grandson, to whom he gave an education that should fit him to fill with dignity the position that his father and his grandfather had held before him. Unfortunately, Moslem feel-

ing against the appearance of princely power among the Jews brought about the assassination of the young prince, and with the death of this last Head of the Exile, the position that for seven centuries had been one of power and pomp came to an end.

The Close of the Schools in Babylon.

In fact, the East was soon to lose its hold on the Jews of the world. After Saadia's death the schools in Babylon steadily declined. In other lands the Jews were now founding schools of their own, and for this reason they sent no more contributions to the colleges in Babylon. Soon the Eastern schools were compelled to close, and the scholars scattered. Asia had ceased to be the center of Jewish culture.

The Importance of Saadia in Jewish History.

Saadia was thus the last Gaon to bring honor and glory to these ancient institutions of learning. His importance in history is due to his establishment of a rational method of Bible interpretation, his pioneer work in the scientific study of the sacred text, and his application of the philosophical methods of the Arabs to Jewish religious thought, thereby bringing to bear upon the Jewish mind the influence of Mohammedan culture—an influence that was to be far more important and lasting than the influence that Greek civilization had gained through the writings of Philo, the Alexandrian philosopher.

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VIII.

CHASDAI IBN SHAPRUT.

Spain the New Center of Jewish Learning.

An old legend has it that the people of Sura, grieved to see their ancient school closed, sent out four of their greatest scholars to visit the large Jewish communities of the world and reawaken interest in the famous old college, so that contributions should flow in and their school be reopened. According to the story, these scholars had an adventuresome voyage. They fell in with pirates, were captured and carried to the slave markets of the ports at which the pirate vessel touched. Now in those days, when pirates infested the seas and made traveling hazardous, charitable Jews counted it among their duties to redeem from slavery such of their brethren as were unfortunate enough to be captured. The Babylonian rabbis were therefore bought by their co-religionists and set at liberty. Two thus found themselves in Africa, where they were able to repay the generosity of their liberators by founding new schools, one in Cairo, Egypt; the other in a Jewish settlement in Tunis. A third probably reached France and carried Jewish learning there. The fourth, Moses ben Enoch, was brought with his young son to Cordova, Spain. Ransomed by the Jews of Cordova, the rabbi, in his slave's garb still, soon found his way to the Jewish college. There he took a humble place near

the door and listened unnoticed to the discussions of the scholars. He had not been there long when a question came up—so the story goes—that the president of the college could not answer. Moses ben Enoch modestly solved the problem, showing so much learning that the president impulsively declared, "I can no longer be your master. This stranger must take my place." Moses thus became the head of the school in Cordova, and under his leadership the Spanish college soon became as famous as the older academies in Sura and Pumbeditha had been in their day. This picturesque old story has no historical foundation, but it expresses vividly the important fact that from Babylonia the center of Jewish influence moved westward to Spain. The questions that had hitherto been sent to Babylon were now sent to Spain. From all the neighboring countries students flocked to Cordova. As it was no longer necessary to go to Babylonia for counsel and training, the schools there were not reopened. Spain took the place of Babylonia as the center of Jewish learning.

The Early History of the Jews in Spain.

Here, long before the time of Moses ben Enoch, Jews had been living. While the country was still pagan, they were happy, respected by their neighbors, holding positions of honor and trust, free to worship God according to the dictates of their religion. When, however, in the sixth century, Spain became a Christian nation, the Jews began to be cruelly persecuted because of their faith. Church councils devised ever new and heavier oppressions. Jews were mulcted in fines, restricted in their occupations, deprived of their rights as citizens and treated as aliens and outcasts. Under bigoted kings and bishops they were tortured and forced into exile. Because of all this, the victorious Mohammedans who swept through Spain at the beginning of the eighth century and broke the power of the Christians, were hailed by the Jews as deliverers. The Jews fought shoulder to shoulder with

the invaders, who welcomed them as valuable allies and granted them absolute equality before the law and perfect freedom of worship. Once again on the Spanish peninsula Jews might work unmolested, without unjust restrictions, following any occupation, holding any office. Once more they could serve the country that they had come to love, fighting for her loyally on the field of battle, joining wisely in her councils at court. Soon there arose on Spanish soil thriving Jewish communities in the great cities of Granada, Cordova, Toledo. Here Jews worked with Moors to advance the well-being of the beautiful land of sunny skies and fragrant orange groves that was now their home in common. These were the conditions, then, that Moses ben Enoch found when he wandered through the stately streets of Cordova. And thus it was that, when Babylon ceased to be the home of Jewish learning, Spain was ready to take its place.

It was not only as soldiers and statesmen, as merchants and as farmers, that Arabs and Jews toiled in harmony.

The Debt of Civilization to the Spanish Jews.

The Mohammedans were an intellectual people. At a time when, in Christian countries, only priests and princes could read and write, in Moorish Spain these accomplishments were usual even among the poorest. The Moorish rulers—the caliphs, as they were called—held scholars and poets in highest esteem, often trusting to them the most important offices of the state. The Mohammedans were interested in the sciences and philosophy. They loved literature. In all these intellectual activities they found comrades in the Jews. They, too, became eager scientists and men of letters. Civilization owes them both a great debt. Through them the poetry of the ancient East, of India, of Persia, became known to Europe. Without their devoted labors many sciences would have been forgotten during the ages when the church looked with suspicion upon secular learning. They did pioneer

work in astronomy and geometry. They were the teachers of medicine in the great universities of Europe. They translated the philosophy of the Greeks into Arabic and Latin, and thus exercised a profound influence on mediaeval thought.

But although the Spanish Jews loved the language and the literature of their adopted country, and acquired eagerly its science and its philosophy, all this bold inquiry into new fields of learning did not make them waver in their devotion to the faith of their fathers. It seemed rather to increase and deepen their love for their own ancient language and its sacred literature, and to strengthen their devotion to the Law. Statesmen and poets alike, scientists and philosophers—all were ardent students of Bible and Talmud.

Students of Jewish Learning.

Prominent among those who helped make Cordova a second Sura was Chasdai ben Isaac ibn Shaprut (915-970). He was the first of a long line of Jewish statesmen who, in spite of the varied duties of their active lives, devoted their best energies to the cause of Judaism. Chasdai was a man of wide culture and many accomplishments. In addition to Hebrew he knew Arabic and also Latin. It was his knowledge of Latin that made him particularly valuable to the caliph, for it enabled him to communicate with the ambassadors from Christian lands. In fact, so important did his services become, that he was practically vizier at court, in full charge of foreign affairs as well as of trade and finance. His prominence in the state, his wealth and power, made it possible for him to render equally valuable service to the Jewish community. In the first place, the sterling character of this eminent Jew inspired among the Moslems whom he served so faithfully a favorable opinion of the race to which he belonged, and lessened that distrust of the alien, that racial prejudice, from which not even the enlightened

Chasdai ibn Shaprut: Patron of Learning.

Moslem was free. Moreover, Chasdai was actively useful to his brethren. In some measure he was the legal head of their community in Cordova. It was his generosity that supported many of the students who were pursuing their studies at the college there. It was he who sent to Babylon to buy at his own expense for the use of the Spanish scholars the copies of the Talmud that were lying idle in Sura.

Chasdai's correspondence gave him knowledge of an historical event, which, although it had but little influence on the course of Jewish history, roused the spirits of the scattered race and inspired it with new courage. Chasdai had heard rumors of the existence in the far East of a Jewish kingdom. When these rumors were confirmed by travelers who had been to that distant land, he could not rest until he had put himself into communication with the monarch of that country. From this correspondence Chasdai learned a strange and interesting story.

The Chazars.

In the south of Russia, on the shores of the Caspian Sea, there lived a wild, warlike race, the Chazars. Under their warrior kings these Chazars won victory after victory, sweeping across Armenia, conquering the Crimean peninsula, and striking terror even into the hearts of the emperors at Constantinople, who paid the invading hordes a tribute to keep them away from the capital city. The Bulgarians were their vassals, and the Russians of Kiev paid them an annual tax.

Their Conversion to Judaism.

These rough soldiers were pagans. Gradually, however, they became acquainted with the higher forms of religion. Arabs and Greeks, who came to barter the products of their countries for the fine furs of the Chazars, made them familiar with Islam and Christianity. There were Jews, too, in their land, fugitives who had escaped from the persecution of other countries. Through these the Chazars came to know Judaism. And in the eighth century, Bulan, king of the Chazars, with his

court and the greater part of his people, became a willing convert to the Jewish religion. It was the Chazar king of Chasdai ibn Shaprut's time with whom the Spanish-Jewish statesman corresponded and from whom he received the story of the conversion. King Bulan—so this story goes—was dissatisfied with the idolatry of his people and the immorality that it permitted. He was encouraged in his desire for something better and nobler by a dream in which an angel appeared to him and said: "Thine intention is good, but not the manner in which thou servest God." The king thereupon summoned before him representative followers of Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Judaism. The Jew succeeded in convincing the king of the truth of his religion. Bulan became an ardent convert, and commenced a Jewish dynasty that endured for more than two centuries.

Another generous patron of Jewish learning was Samuel ibn Nagdela (993-1055). Through his unusual skill in languages and his insight into affairs of state, he became, like Chasdai, minister to a caliph, and under his wise guidance the kingdom of Granada flourished. Like Chasdai, too, he was the head of the Jewish community, and in this capacity he received the title of Nagid, or Prince. He, too, found time among affairs of state for rabbinical learning. Like Moses ben Enoch, at whose school he studied, he was a thorough Talmudist. He delivered lectures on the Talmud and compiled a Talmud commentary that was recognized as the standard authority. He was poet, too, as well as minister of state and rabbi. He wrote prayers that had the religious fervor of the Biblical psalms; proverbs that in their keen observation of men and affairs, were in the manner of the Book of Proverbs; and a book of philosophy for which he had as model the Book of Ecclesiastes. Under his protection Spanish-Jewish culture throve.

Samuel ibn Nagdela.

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IX.

SOLOMON IBN GABIROL.

One of the greatest of the philosophers and poets of this golden age was Solomon ibn Gabirol, born in Moorish Spain about 1020. Of his life little is known. From his poems we learn that he was early left an orphan. His loss and his consequent loneliness were probably the cause of the intense melancholy that characterizes his poems. Later, too, a kindly Jewish vizier who had befriended him was assassinated, and this new sorrow cast another shadow over the young poet's life. Friends tried to drive away his gloom—among them Samuel ibn Nagdela, that patron of poets and scholars—but our poet could find no joy in human intercourse. It was only in loving communion with the merciful Father that he could pour out his desolation and be comforted.

Early Life.

"The Fountain of Life" was Ibn Gabirol's contribution to the Jewish philosophical literature. He is not only the first Jewish philosopher in Spain, but the very first philosopher who lived and wrote on Spanish soil. In the form of a conversation between a master and one of his disciples, his work sets forth the philosophy of the Greek thinkers who preceded Aristotle. But although Philo and Saadia had adapted Greek and Arabic philosophy to the teachings of Judaism and had attempted to harmonize the two modes of thought, Ibn Gabirol's "Fountain of Life" shows little unmistakable Jew-

"The Fountain of Life."

ish feeling. For this reason the book exercised comparatively little influence on Jewish practical life, although in the realm of Jewish thought it took its place among the influences that make for the cultivation of science, for the broadening of the mental outlook, and, above all, for the recognition of the need of harmonizing Jewish tradition with the culture of the age. Ibn Gabirol's book had a strange history. It had as important an influence on mediaeval Christianity as Philo's writings had had on early Christianity. It was translated into Latin, and as "Fons Vitae" was diligently studied by Christian scholars. The name of the Jewish writer, in process of translation from Arabic to Latin, came gradually to be changed out of all resemblance to Ibn Gabirol. It went from Ibn Gabirol to Avencebrol, then to Avicembron, and it was as Avicebron that the author was known to the Christians of the Middle Ages, and the "Fons Vitae" was not suspected of being a Jewish production. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Solomon Munk, a Jewish scholar in France, proved the identity of the author who first taught the philosophy of Plato to Europe with the Jewish poet, Solomon ibn Gabirol.

His Poems.

It is rather as a poet than as a philosopher that Ibn Gabirol is best loved by his fellow-Jews. His religious poems are written in Hebrew that has the classical simplicity and beauty of the Bible, and yet they introduce into the Hebrew verse the rhythm of Arabic poetry. They breathe a profound trust in God that has won many of them a place in the prayer-book of the Spanish Jews. One of the most beautiful of them is "The Kingly Crown", a hymn in praise of the splendor of God's creation and His wisdom in ruling the world. His poems have been translated into many languages. The following English versions can give you an idea of their message, but only a faint conception of their beauty in the original. With

the first you are probably already familiar, for it is sung to-day in synagogue and in religious school.

CONSTANT PRAISE.[1]

Early will I seek Thee,
God, my refuge strong;
Late prepare to meet Thee
With my evening song.

Though unto Thy greatness
I with trembling soar,
Yet my inmost thinking
Lies Thine eyes before.

What this frail heart dreameth
And my tongue's poor speech–
Can that, even distant,
To Thy greatness reach?

Being great in mercy,
Thou wilt not despise
Praises which till death's hour
From my soul shall rise.

A SONG OF REDEMPTION.[2]

Captive of sorrow on a foreign shore,
A handmaid as 'neath Egypt's slavery:
Through the dark day of her bereavement sore
She looketh unto Thee.
Restore her sons, O Mighty One of old!
Her remnant tenth shall cause man's strife to cease.
O speed the message; swiftly be she told
Good tidings, which Elijah shall unfold:
Daughter of Zion, sing aloud! behold
Thy Prince of Peace!

Wherefore wilt Thou forget us, Lord, for aye?
Mercy we crave!
O Lord, we hope in Thee alway,
Our King will save!

. . . . . .

[1] Translation by Gustav Gottheil.
[2] Translation by Nina Davis.

Is this Thy voice?
The voice of captive Ariel's woe unhealed?
Virgin of Israel, arise, rejoice!
In Daniel's vision, lo, the end is sealed,
When Michael in the height
Shall stand aloft in strength,
And shout aloud in might,
And a Redeemer come to Zion at length.
Amen, amen, behold
The Lord's decree foretold,
E'en as Thou hast our souls afflicted sore,
So wilt Thou make us glad forevermore!

O SOUL WITH STORMS BESET.[1]

O soul, with storms beset,
Thy griefs and cares forget!
Why dread earth's transient woe,
When soon thy body in the grave unseen
Shall be laid low,
And all will be forgotten then, as though
It had not been?
. . . . . .

Life is a vine, whose crown
The reaper Death cuts down.
His ever-watchful eyes
Mark every step, until night's shadows fall,
And swiftly flies
The passing day, and ah! how distant lies
The goal of all.

Therefore, rebellious soul,
Thy base desires control;
With scantly given bread
Content thyself, nor let thy memory stray
To splendors fled,
But call to mind affliction's weight, and dread
The judgment day.

Prostrate and humbled go,
Like to the dove laid low.
Remember evermore

[1] Translation by Alice Lucas.

The peace of heaven, the Lord's eternal rest.
When burdened sore
With sorrow's load, at every step implore
His succor bless'd.

Before God's mercy-seat
His pardoning love entreat.
Make pure thy thoughts from sin,
And bring a contrite heart as sacrifice
His grace to win—
Then will His angels come and lead thee in
To Paradise.

Ibn Gabirol was teacher of morals as well as philosopher and poet. His "Improvement of the Moral Qualities" is a treatise on ethics, in which he attempts to guide his readers to the betterment of their characters by showing them how to hold their lower impulses under the control of their higher nature. He is also thought to be the author of "The Choice of Pearls", a collection of proverbs and moral reflections, many of them of Arabic origin.

His Treatise on Ethics.

Ibn Gabirol died in 1070. A legend relates that an Arabian poet, jealous of the Jew's power of song, slew him and buried his body beneath the roots of a fig tree. The tree thereupon bore blossoms of such surpassing beauty, and fruit so unusually abundant and so extraordinarily sweet, that the whole city talked of the marvel. Even the caliph heard of it. The Moor was asked how he had raised his wonderful fruit; whereupon he showed so marked an embarrassment that a search was instituted. People dug under the tree and found the body of the murdered poet, and his slayer expiated his crime with his life. Heinrich Heine tells the story in the following stanzas:[1]

His Death.

Great Gabirol, true and loyal,
God-devoted minnesinger,

[1] Translation by Margaret Armour.

Pious nightingale who sang not
To a rose, but to his God—

Tender nightingale who sweetly
Sang his love songs in the dimness,
In the darkness of the Gothic,
Of the mediaeval night!

Undismayed, and fearing nothing
From the ugly shapes and spirits,
From the waste of death and madness
Which that night so weirdly haunted,

He, the nightingale, thought only
Of his heavenly beloved,
'Twas to Him he sobbed his passion,
It was He his song exalted.

Now at Cordova, his city,
Dwelt a Moor, his next-door neighbor,
Who wrote verses too, and envied
Sore the poet his renown.

He enticed his hated rival
To his house by night, and slew him,
And behind the house, the body
In a garden plot he buried.

But behold! From out the ground
Where the body had been hidden
Sprang a fig tree forth, and blossomed—
Tree of great and wondrous beauty.

Of a curious length its fruit was,
And of strange and spicy sweetness,
And who ate thereof sank swooning
In a trance of dreamy rapture.

And because of this the people
Fell to talking and to muttering,
Till at last the spreading rumor
Reached the caliph's high-born ears.

Then this marvel among fig trees
By the caliph's self was tested,
Who appointed a commission
To investigate the matter.

They proceeded straight to business,
Gave the owner of the fig tree
Sixty strokes upon his soles
With the bamboo; forced confession;

To the fig tree went and tore it
By its roots from out the ground,
And discovered hid beneath it,
Poor Gabirol's murdered body.

This with pomp and state was buried
And lamented by the brethren,
And that day the Moor was taken
And at Cordova was hanged.

Another who sang of God was Moses ibn Ezra, member of an illustrious Spanish-Jewish family. He was born in Granada, about 1070. A disappointment in love drove him from his native city to seek amid other scenes peace from his pain. But that peace he never found, and his unhappiness tinged with melancholy his life and his verse.

Moses ibn Ezra.

With him, as with Solomon ibn Gabirol, philosophy and poetry went hand in hand. He shows profound knowledge of the Greek-Arabic thinkers, of Saadia, and of Ibn Gabirol. But he is more the poet than the philosopher. In "Tarshish" he sings of wine, love, and song. He paints in vivid phrases the beauties of country life. He mournfully describes the pangs of love and the separation of lovers. Lonely and friendless through life, he reflects on unfaithful friends, on the vicissitudes of fortune, on death. He bewails the loss of youth and finds the only consolation of age in its freedom from passion. All these varied subjects he cast into an Arabic verse-form in which words are repeated in every stanza, but each time with a different meaning. And each of the ten chapters of the volume contains in order the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Others of his secular poems, gathered

His Secular Poems.

into a "Diwan" or collection, are mainly praises of men whom the poet admired, and elegies on the death of scholars.

It is in his religious poems, however, that his real power lies. Through them all runs the note of humilty before God, of consciousness of sin and longing for repentance. Almost all of them are hymns for the Penitential Days. Their aim is to make man realize the emptiness of life, the vanity of worldly glory, the bitter disillusionment that comes at last to the seeker after pleasure, the inevitableness of Divine judgment. They are of remarkable beauty in thought and in expression.

His Religious Poetry.

In contrast to these great poets of sorrow is the cheerful figure of a man of action as we have it in a record of his travels. Benjamin of Tudela, a Spanish Jew, set out from Saragossa in 1160. He probably traveled as a merchant, but he took an interest in more than the commercial aspects of the lands to which his business led him. He made long stays everywhere, giving himself plenty of time to observe conditions and modes of life, to collect information and to verify the accounts that were given him. His route to the East took him through Catalonia, southern France, Italy, Greece, the islands of the Levant, Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia to Bagdad. In that city he gathered information concerning the countries that lay still farther east and north and about the large Jewish congregations in Persia. His homeward voyage lay through Khuzistan, the Indian Ocean, and Yemen to Egypt; thence by way of Sicily back to Spain, after thirteen years of travel.

Benjamin of Tudela.

In every place that Benjamin visited he took notes, and on his return to Spain these notes were compiled into a book. This book of his shows his keen interest in everything that he saw and heard, and his clear insight into the conditions of the countries through which he traveled. Nor was his interest confined

His "Itinerary."

to Jewish affairs. His account contains information concerning the political history and the development of the countries he visited, and the history of commerce finds in his "Itinerary" much valuable material. He paints a vivid picture of the cities of Barcelona, Montpelier, Constantinople, and Alexandria as centers of international trade. He gives a graphic description of the republics of Genoa and Pisa, in which every house was a fortress. In short, all he wrote shows his acuteness of observation and his intelligent understanding of conditions.

Valuable Accounts of the Jews of the Twelfth Century.

His chief interest, however, was undoubtedly in the Jews of the countries through which he traveled. Of them he has given so many and such important and reliable accounts, that his "Itinerary" is considered a source of first importance for the history of the Jews in the twelfth century. From him we learn the number of Jews in the various cities, of their varied occupations,—dyeing in Palestine and other countries, the manufacture of silk and purple in Thebes in Greece, glass making in Antioch and Tyre, for example. He tells of the Karaites in Constantinople, Ashkelon, and Damascus; and he has much to say about the Jews of Bagdad and other cities of the East. Although he was not himself a scholar, he had a profound respect for scholarship, and he always recorded the names of the learned men of the cities through which he passed.

A Traveler of Sound Judgment.

In all his notes he gives evidence of sound judgment and the ability to distinguish between fact and fiction with a good sense not always shown in works of travel, even in those of a later day than Benjamin of Tudela's. And he was able to throw his observations of people and places into an interesting narrative, plain and unadorned, but at the same time clear and concise.

Suggestions for Further Reading.

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Husik, I.: *History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy,* pp. 59-79.

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Jewish Encyclopedia: Vol. III, p. 34, Article *Benjamin of Tudela.*

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X.

BACHYA IBN PAKUDA.

Of the life of Bachya ben Joseph ibn Pakuda, all we know is that he bore the title of Dayyan, or judge of a rabbinical court, in some Spanish community, apparently Saragossa. Modern scholars think it probable that he lived after Solomon ibn Gabirol, possibly in the first half of the twelfth century, although some think him a somewhat younger contemporary of Gabirol, and thus place him as early as the first half of the eleventh century. It is evident that he was thoroughly familiar with the whole range of philosophical and scientific Arabic literature,—with the natural sciences, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and metaphysics. As Dayyan he was master also of rabbinical learning, and, like all Spanish Jews of his time, he was acquainted with the grammatical and philosophical works of the Jews and their achievements in poetry, he himself having poetical qualities of no mean order.

His Life.

In his old age he wrote a book, "Guide to the Duties of the Heart", to which he brought all the wealth of his learning, all the beauty of his poetical style, all the warmth and piety of his devoted, loving heart. He wrote it in Arabic, so that the Jews of Spain who were not scholars and could not read Hebrew should understand it. But the Jews of Christian Europe could not read Arabic, and so it was translated into

His Book: "Guide to the Duties of the Heart."

Hebrew by Judah ibn Tibbon, one of a famous family of translators, in 1161, and then it became the property of Israel the world over. The Jews of the Middle Ages used it as a manual of devotional literature. The Hebrew translation was in turn translated into various European languages; it was commented on, expanded, abridged, paraphrased, imitated. Large portions of it found their way into the prayer-books, as did a penitential hymn which Bachya composed.

This book, which at once became so popular, so truly a book of the people, is an ethical treatise, the first systematic work on ethics written by a Jew. For the first time, the rich ethical content of Judaism is formulated and worked into a system. Nor does Bachya limit himself to Jewish sources. He draws largely from the works of Mohammedans of various schools and sects, and through them, from Plato as they conceived him. But although some writers call Bachya an original thinker of high rank, and his work a philosophical classic, his purpose was not that of the philosopher. His object was not to argue about the doctrines of Judaism and defend them, as Saadia had done; it was not to examine critically the foundations of his faith and reconcile it with current philosophy: it was to deepen and to make more spiritual the religious feeling among the Jews of his day, to spread among them a loftier motive and a more loving conception of devotion and duty.

An Ethical Treatise.

He saw the significance of the distinction made by the Moslems between outward observance, known as "duties of the limbs", and inward feeling, called "duties of the heart." From this idea came his inspiring title.

Its Title.

The "Guide to the Duties of the Heart" is divided into ten sections, which Bachya calls "gates." In each of them he considers one of the ten fundamental principles, which, according to his view, constitute man's spiritual life. As the very essence of spirituality is the recognition of God as

the one Maker of all things, Bachya makes the Gate of Divine Unity the first and foremost section. Taking "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One" as his starting-point, he emphasizes the fact that religion is not so much a matter of knowing God through the intellect, as of loving Him with the heart. Yet he would not have us accept the belief in God without thinking, blindly following our fathers; on the contrary, he urges comprehensive knowledge of God as a duty. Like all the Arabian philosophers and theologians with whose work he was familiar, he argues from the creation of the world to a Creator. He then proceeds, following Saadia, to prove the unity of God. The harmony of all things in nature, the wondrous plan and wisdom displayed in the structure of the greatest and the smallest beings, all point to one great Designer.

The Gate of Divine Unity.

But how can man, with his limited human reason, attain to a knowledge of the great God? Insistence on knowing the sun beyond what is possible to the human eye causes blindness; so insistence on knowing Him who is unknowable bewilders and confounds the mind. We can, however, ponder on God and His greatness and goodness as they are manifest in the wonders of nature,—the marvels of the heavens, the birds and the flowers, the rain and the sunshine,—and in man's body and in his daily life. To this duty of divine contemplation is devoted the second section, the Gate of Reflection. Here Bachya presents an interesting and beautiful system of natural philosophy, and goes from that to a survey of the physiology and psychology of man. Such considerations as these fill man's soul with gratitude and praise for the love and wisdom of the Creator.

The Gate of Reflection.

These feelings lead man to the worship of God, the subject of the third section, the Gate of Divine Worship. Worship of God in obedience to the commandments of the Law

is of unmistakable value inasmuch as it asserts the higher claims of life against its lower desires; yet this is not the highest form of worship, as it may be prompted by fear of punishment or hope of reward—or it may be altogether formal and without that inward spiritual fervor which alone makes the soul invincible in temptation and trial. Still the Law is necessary as a guide, since there exist in man two injurious tendencies,—one, to lead a life of the senses only, like the brute; the other, to despise the world of the senses altogether, and to devote oneself only to the life of the spirit. Between these two extremes the Law shows the correct "middle way." It educates all the people, the immature as well as those of mature intellect, for the service of God, which is the service of the heart. And Bachya gives an exposition of the teachings of the Law and the rabbis, emphasizing the spirituality without which all observance of ceremony and all study of the Law fail of their purpose.

The Gate of Divine Worship.

A long dialogue follows between the Soul and the Intellect on worship, on freedom of will, and on the faculties of the soul,—joy and grief, fear and hope, love and hatred,—in all, ten pairs of contrasting faculties.

Trust in God forms the title of the fourth gate. All that the world has to offer will disappoint man in the end. He alone enjoys contentment and peace who confides in God. Here Bachya dwells on the hope of immortality.

The Gate of Trust in God.

Consecration of Action, sincerity of purpose, is treated in the fifth gate. No one is more repulsive to the pious soul than the hypocrite. The sixth gate deals with Humility, humility towards man, but especially towards God. The seventh is the Gate of Repentance. Even the best of men are not those who have kept free from sin, but those who feel regret at having committed it and repent. Bachya quotes

Consecration of Action, Humility, Repentance, Self-Examination.

from the rabbis' sayings to the effect that the sinner who repents ranks higher than he who has never sinned, concluding with the beautiful words of one of the masters to his disciples, "Were you altogether free from sin, I should be afraid of what is far greater than sin—that is, pride and hypocrisy." The next gate, the eighth, entitled Self-Examination, is of the same character as the seventh: it exhorts man to take a serious and lofty view of life.

The following section, the Gate of Seclusion from the World, Bachya devotes to a problem which is evidently uppermost in his mind, the relation of religion to asceticism. Bachya's own religious feeling had a decided tendency to asceticism, to the suppression of worldly desires and the ideal of living in spiritual seclusion. Yet he says that the highest seclusion is to be found, not far from the world's turmoil and strife, but in the midst of its pursuits and struggles, in a life of moderation, regarding this world as preparation for a higher one.

The Gate of Seclusion from the World.

The aim of all ethical self-discipline is the Love of God, and this forms the subject of the last gate. This Bachya explains as the longing of the soul, amid all the attractions that bind it to the earth, for the fountain of its life, in which alone it finds joy and peace. In this the soul reaches its goal, the highest of its duties, the love of God with heart, soul, and might.

The Gate of the Love of God.

All this Bachya wrote in a manner eloquent with depth of feeling, with vivid poetical imagination, and with great beauty of diction. He illustrated his teachings with a wealth of sayings and parables drawn from Mohammedan literature, as well as with frequent and apt quotation from the Scriptures and from the works of rabbinical writers. His personality shines through every line,—a soul full of the beauty of holiness, pious, loving, broadly tolerant. And so it is that while systems of philosophy come and go, while indeed the philosophical

Its Lasting Beauty and Value.

groundwork which Bachya himself used was outgrown and abandoned centuries ago, the moral and ethical lessons of the "Guide to the Duties of the Heart" are of lasting beauty and undiminished value.

Suggestions for Further Reading.

Bachya: *The Duties of the Heart,* translated by E. Collins.

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XI.

JUDAH HALEVI.

In the twelfth century, Spain was in a state of almost constant warfare. The small kingdoms into which the beautiful land was divided were always warring against one another,—Christian against Christian, Moor against Moor. And from the north the Christians were making ever more frequent and more vigorous attempts to drive the Mohammedans from the peninsula. In these troubled times the Jews suffered,—now forced into the quarrel of caliph against caliph, now into the war of Moor upon Christian. But even in these unquiet days, the Spanish Jew was still better off than his brethren in other European countries. Merchant-prince and statesman, philosopher and poet still flourished. And it was Christian Spain in the twelfth century that was the home of the greatest poet whom Judaism had inspired since the days of the Bible.

Twelfth Century Spain.

Judah Halevi was born in 1086 in Toledo, the capital city of the Christian kingdom of Castile. Of his life little has been definitely recorded. We can, however, learn much about him from his poems, for, like most poets, he wove every experience, every emotion, into the fabric of his song. He was probably sent by his father to the school of Isaac Alfasi, a great authority on the Talmud. Here Judah studied the Bible and the Talmud, and here he probably gained the mastery of Hebrew

The Early Life of Judah Halevi.

that made his poems scarcely inferior to those of the psalmists of old. Nor did he study only the various branches of Jewish learning; he became well acquainted with Arabic and Castilian literature, with the natural sciences, astronomy, and medicine, and with Greek and Arabic philosophy. And, as he was in easy circumstances, he pursued these studies in a pleasant, leisurely fashion.

After he had gained all that he could at Isaac Alfasi's school, he returned to Toledo. In his native city, he earned his livelihood as a physician; and he soon became so widely and favorably known, and acquired so large a practice, that we find him complaining in a letter to a friend of lack of leisure for the matters that lay nearest his heart,—his studies and his writing. In Toledo he married, and from allusions in some of his poems we learn that he had one child, a daughter. At his home there gathered about the scholarly young physician a large circle of friends, many of them the most famous men of his time. He must have had a winning personality, for these scholars and poets loved him dearly. Unlike that other Spanish Hebrew poet, Solomon ibn Gabirol, he was of a serene and sunny temperament. His capacity for friendship and comradeship is reflected in the poems that he wrote about this time. Some celebrate his joy at the happiness of his friends—at the marriage of one, at the birth of a child to another. Some tell of his profound grief when death took away one of that devoted group. Beautiful love songs, too, he wrote, as well as poems of friendship,—all of them voicing his passionate love for his wife. Nature he loved, also; he looked with delight upon the charm and the grandeur of the varied scenery of Spain. He sang:

His Early Poems.

> "I found that words could ne'er express
> The half of all its loveliness."

Judah Halevi's character, however, was, above all, reli-

gious. In every moment of life,—in the commonplace concerns of the daily task, in illness, in peril at sea, —God is the Friend above all earthly friends—dear though they were; God is the ever-present Comforter to whom the poet turned. A prayer showing the spirit in which Halevi pursued his calling as physician closes with these lines:

His Religious Muse.

> ". . . All my faith I place,
> Not in my craft, but in Thy grace."

A love of God not less intense than that of the Psalmist is expressed in the verses,

> "When I am estranged from Thee, O God,
> I die whilst I live; but when
> I cleave to Thee, I live even in death."

"For Thy songs, O God!" he cried, "my heart is a harp." Every holy day inspired him to sing: there is no feast day or fast day that is not enriched by his songs. More than three hundred of his poems have been adopted into the liturgy of the synagogue; his hymns beautify the services of the Jewish home.

Next to God, the poet loved his people,—their glorious past, their heroism in their present almost unbearable sufferings, their unconquerable hope for the future. He was overcome with sorrow at the sight of Israel scattered among the nations, robbed of fatherland and Temple, a wanderer. Yet he never lost faith in the eternity of the people with the God-given mission. This was the thought that gave him courage:

A Poet of Zion.

> "Lo! sun and moon, these minister for aye;
> The laws of night and day cease nevermore:
> Given for signs to Jacob's seed that they
> Shall ever be a nation—till these be o'er.
> If with His left hand He should thrust away,
> Lo! with His right hand He shall draw them nigh.

Let them not cry; 'Tis desperate'; nor say:
'Hope faileth, yea, and strength is near to die';—
Let them believe that they shall be alway,
Nor cease until there be no night nor day."

His "Songs of Zion."

No other Jewish poet so closely cherished and so glowingly narrated the splendid ancient history of Israel; no one longed more fervently to set foot on the soil of the Holy Land, to pray in the courts of the sacred Temple, ruined though they were. For him Jerusalem was "the city of the world":

"Oh! city of the world, most chastely fair;
In the far west, behold I sigh for thee.
And in my yearning love I do bethink me
Of bygone ages; of thy ruined fane,
The vanished splendor of a vanished day.
Oh! had I eagles' wings I'd fly to thee
And with my falling tears make moist thine earth.
I long for thee; what though indeed thy kings
Have passed forever; though where once uprose,
Sweet balsam trees the serpent makes his nest.
Oh! that I might embrace thy dust, the sod
Were sweet as honey to my fond desire."

It is songs like these that made his contemporaries and succeeding generations recognize him as the great Jewish national poet, expressing in his inspired verse feelings that stirred the hearts of all the exiled members of his race. For the Jews of the Middle Ages keenly felt the pangs of exile: they yearned for the land of Patriarch and Prophet, of Psalmist and King. Halevi's best poems are those that give utterance to this burning desire,—his "Songs of Zion." The greatest of them contains the following stanzas. The translation is by Alice Lucas.

"Art thou not, Zion, fain
To send forth greetings from thy sacred rock
Unto thy captive train
Who greet thee as the remnants of thy flock?

Take thou, on every side,
East, west and south and north, their greetings multiplied.
Sadly he greets thee still,
The prisoner of hope who, day and night,
Sheds ceaseless tears, like dew on Hermon's hill.
Would that they fell upon thy mountain's height.

"The glory of the Lord will ever be
Thy sole and perfect light;
No need hast thou, then, to illumine thee,
Of sun by day, and moon and stars by night.
I would that, where God's spirit was of yore
Poured out unto thy holy ones, I might
There, too, my soul outpour!
The house of kings and throne of God wert thou,
How comes it then that now
Slaves fill the throne where sat thy kings before?

"O! who will lead me on
To seek the spots where, in far distant years,
The angels in their glory dawned upon
Thy messengers and seers?
O! who will give me wings
That I may fly away,
And there, at rest from all my wanderings,
The ruins of my heart among thy ruins lay?
I'll bend my face unto thy soil, and hold
Thy stones as precious gold.

"Thy air is life unto my soul, thy grains
Of dust are myrrh, thy streams with honey flow;
Naked and barefoot, to thy ruined fanes
How gladly would I go;
To where the ark was treasured, and in dim
Recesses dwelt the holy cherubim.

"Perfect in beauty, Zion, how in thee
Do love and grace unite!
The souls of thy companions tenderly
Turn unto thee: thy joy was their delight.
And weeping they lament thy ruin now.
In distant exile, for thy sacred height
They long, and towards thy gates in prayer they bow.
Thy flocks are scattered o'er the barren waste,

Yet do they not forget thy sheltering fold,
Unto thy garments' fringe they cling, and haste
The branches of thy palms to seize and hold.

"The Lord desires thee for His dwelling place
Eternally; and blest
Is he whom God has chosen for the grace
Within thy courts to rest.
Happy is he that watches, drawing near,
Until he sees thy glorious light arise,
And over whom thy dawn breaks full and clear
Set in the Orient skies.
But happiest he, who, with exultant eyes,
The bliss of thy redeemed ones shall behold,
And see thy youth renewed as in the days of old."

It was not only in his beautiful poems that Judah Halevi wrote about Judaism. He was philosopher as well as poet. He had profound thoughts about life and religion, thoughts that demanded fuller expression than they could find within the narrow limits of a lyric. But because Halevi had the poet's imagination, the poet's love of telling his story vividly, he was not content to put his thoughts into a dry, unlovely treatise. Like Plato, the great Greek philosopher, like the author of the Book of Job, he sought an interesting framework in which to set forth his philosophy. This he found in the story of the conversion of the Chazars, which gave him the background for his great philosophical discussion. The conversation between the inquiring king and the wise men to whom he turned for guidance gave Halevi an opportunity to express his own thoughts on religion.

Philosopher as well as Poet.

He represented Bulan as seeking light first from a philosopher, who told the king of a God who was remote from the affairs of earth, with no connection with human events and no interest in man. This view seemed cold and comfortless to the troubled heathen; he would have none of it. He summoned then a

The Framework of his "Cuzari."

Christian priest to learn from him the true religion. The priest told him that Christianity accepts as true much that Judaism teaches, but holds as its fundamental belief the mystic doctrine of the Trinity that is still a Unity; Bulan, however, found that his reason refused to accept this, and he accordingly rejected Christianity as not in accord with the demands of the intellect. He turned next to a Mohammedan. Surely now he would hear the true way to worship God. The Mohammedan based the authority of his religion on a book, the Koran. No man, he said, would be capable of producing so remarkable a book; it must therefore be of divine origin. To the pagan king, however, the Koran was a sealed volume; he could not read it. And so the Arab, too, left him unsatisfied. Both Christian and Mohammedan, in tracing the historical development of their religions, had mentioned Judaism as the foundation upon which each later religion had been reared. Accordingly, the truth-seeking king sent at last for one of the despised and scattered race of Jews, and questioned him concerning the teachings of his faith. Into this conversation between rabbi and king, Halevi wove his interpretation of the meaning of Judaism.

It is not to the philosophers—said Halevi's rabbi—that we must turn for knowledge of God, but to the prophets. Faith, not philosophy, is the trustworthy guide in religion. Cold reason alone can not penetrate the deeper mysteries; unaided by the revelation of God, it gropes in the dark. In this manner Halevi rebuked those Spanish Jews who had come more and more to put their trust in systems of philosophy—systems that came and went with the changing thought of the age—now Plato and again Aristotle—rather than in the changeless God.

Faith, not Philosophy, the Guide.

The rabbi went on to defend the persecuted race and the despised faith against the more powerful creeds. Neither Christianity nor Islam helps us, he said, for these religions

turn their back on reason; the cardinal doctrines of their faith are opposed to reason. Judaism, on the contrary, is reasonable; although it assigns to reason its limits, and does not, as we have seen, follow the philosophers into the labyrinth of conclusions in which, in Halevi's day, they had entangled themselves, far from the truth they seemed to be seeking. Philosophy—reason—can not assail Judaism, for Judaism stands on a firm basis of historical facts, a genuine and indisputable tradition. Here the rabbi pointed to the unbroken chain of Jewish history, showing the preservation of the chosen race throughout the ages. Here is the people that first recognized God in His world; the people that, since the time of the Patriarchs, has clung steadfastly to its faith in Him, despite well-nigh intolerable persecution. Surely a people that survives the calamities that have befallen the Israelites is being preserved by the especial grace of God for His divine purpose. He delivered them from the slavery of Egypt; He led them safely through the perils of the wilderness; He throws about them still His providential care.

The Unbroken Chain of Jewish Tradition.

Nor is the king to think that the present miserable condition of the Jews, scattered among the nations, oppressed and scorned, is proof of their inferiority. No more is this true than that the wealth and power of Christians and Moslems are signs of their superiority. Indeed, poverty and misery, despised by men, are of higher merit with God than presumptuous pride and overbearing greatness. Do not the Christians themselves profess to take most pride, not in their mighty princes, but in the lowly Jesus, and in the saints who suffered humiliation, persecution, and martyrdom? And do not the Moslems reverence the memory of those followers of the Prophet who endured much suffering for his sake? But the greatest sufferer is Israel. He is among men what the heart is to the body. Just as the heart suffers with every hurt that

Israel the Heart among the Nations.

any part of the body feels, so Israel feels most keenly every wrongdoing among the nations. He is, in the words of the prophet, "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." For God knows that the heart of mankind can endure most; therefore he has afflicted it most sorely. That is part of its preparation for its great task, its mission of spreading the truth of God to all the peoples of the earth. For this duty Israel has been trained by the teachings of the Torah, the burning messages of the prophets, the wise regulations of sages and rabbis.

Israel the Seed of God's Planting.

But Israel will not suffer forever. A brighter future will dawn for the priest-people. Israel is like the seed, scattered in the dark earth, apparently lost and dead. At the appointed season, like the seed, it will spring to new life in bud and blossom. "The wise providence of God towards Israel may be compared to the planting of a seed of corn. It is placed in the earth, where it seems to be changed into soil, and water, and rottenness. And the seed can no longer be recognized. But in very truth it is the seed that has changed the earth and water into its own nature, and then the seed raises itself from one stage to another, transforms the elements, and throws out shoots and leaves. . . . Thus it is with Christians and Moslems. The Law of Moses has changed them that have come into contact with it, even though they seem to have cast the Law aside. These religions are the preparation and the preface to the Messiah we expect, who is the fruit Himself of the seed originally sown, and all men, too, will be fruit of God's seed when they acknowledge Him, and all become one mighty tree." As soon, then, as the religions that have proceeded from Judaism shall have completed their task of preparing mankind to worship the one true God, then shall come the time when all the earth shall acknowledge Jehovah as He revealed Himself to His people. And on that day Israel shall be honored as the nation that at all

times honored Him. Notice, by the way, the noble tolerance of Halevi's words, spoken, you must remember, when Israel was being persecuted by both Christians and Moslems.

Thus Judah Halevi refuted the attacks that philosophers, Christians, and Mohammedans made upon Judaism, and eloquently preached his own conception of his religion. His book had a tremendous influence on thoughtful men. Written in Arabic, it was translated into Hebrew and Latin, and later into many other languages.

The Influence of the "Cuzari."

Scarcely was the "Cuzari" finished when Halevi's longing for Jerusalem became an overpowering passion. He had always yearned for the land of his fathers, and now that his wife was dead, there was no bond that could hold him to Spain. Neither the daughter whom he dearly loved, nor his grandson; neither the devotion of his pupils nor the happiness of communion with his friends could now keep the poet from the land of his dreams. From the comfort and security of Spain he embarked on his adventurous, dangerous journey. After a stormy sea voyage, he arrived in Egypt. There he visited all the places where his forefathers had lived and suffered. Then, in spite of the protests of the Egyptian Jews, who pleaded with their distinguished visitor to remain in their land, hallowed by so many Jewish memories, he went forward, retracing the desert route over which Moses had led the Jewish wanderers of old. Again we hear of the poet, worn out with the rigors of travel, in Tyre and Damascus. And here we lose sight of him; the records cease. But Jewish legend has taken up the story where history breaks off. It tells us that Halevi's desire was fulfilled—that he reached Jerusalem, the city of his songs, and stood at last at its gate. Thrilled by the sight of the Holy City, he bowed himself to the ground and sang his most beautiful song of Zion. At that moment an Arab horseman dashed

A Pilgrim to Zion.

recklessly through the gate; and the poet, trampled to the earth, died with the song on his lips. Neither the year of his death nor the place of his burial is known to us. It is probable, however, that he died in 1146.

"A Fiery Pillar of Sweet Song."

And more durable than a monument in marble or bronze, he has, to perpetuate his name, his great work on religion and philosophy, and his wonderful songs that helped his descendants, through all the dreary years of their oppression, to confidence and courage. They gratefully remember his lessons,—that faith will guide the world through every puzzling doubt, faith in the God who revealed Himself through patriarch and prophet, and who manifests Himself and His divine purpose in the preservation of Israel through the ages of trial and preparation for a time when the "heart of nations" shall no longer suffer, but shall rejoice in a united mankind worshipping the one God together. And even more than they treasure his philosophy, they sing his songs, wherever they gather in worship on Sabbaths and on holy days, his songs so fervent in their love of God and their faith in His promises, so passionate in their devotion to the "heart of nations" and the "heart of the world", and so exquisitely beautiful in their melody, that Judah Halevi has remained to this day one of the most tenderly loved of all the great men of Israel's rich past. Love of him inspired Heinrich Heine to write a long poem of reverent admiration, in which the German poet eloquently retold the story of the Spanish Jewish singer. He calls him:

"Star and torch to guide his time,
Light and beacon of his nation;

"Fiery pillar of sweet song,
Moving on in front of Israel's
Caravans of woe and mourning
In the wilderness of exile."

Suggestions for Further Reading.

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XII.

ABRAHAM IBN EZRA.

An old legend tells us that when Judah Halevi's daughter had grown to young womanhood, her mother frequently reproached the poet because he made no attempt to find a suitable husband for their only child. One day, losing patience, Judah Halevi is said to have exclaimed, "The first stranger who enters my house shall become my son-in-law." That very day there came to beg shelter at the poet's house a wayfarer, his clothing worn and travel-stained. To the alarmed eyes of the anxious mother the wanderer seemed uncouth and ignorant. The father, however, took the stranger in. Now on that day the poet had been working on a Purim song. When he had almost finished the poem, his inspiration suddenly left him, and, try as he would, he could not find the appropriate thought, the fitting words. At last, leaving his task unfinished, he went to his rest. The stranger, meanwhile, had noticed the anxiety of his host. When the house grew quiet, and he was sure that every one slept, he went softly into Halevi's study and there found the unfinished poem. In a few minutes he had supplied the missing end. The next morning Halevi was astonished to find his poem completed, and to read in the last lines the thought that he had long sought in vain. In great surprise he cried, "That was written either by an angel or by Abraham ibn Ezra." And Abraham ibn Ezra it was.

Abraham ibn Ezra.

This old story gives us a vivid picture of that scholar and thinker, Abraham ibn Ezra. It shows him as a wanderer, carrying his poetic gift, his varied learning, his striking ideas into many lands. And indeed he was a restless wanderer all his days. He was born in Toledo in 1092. But although he always called himself a Spaniard, and gave frequent expression to his love for his fatherland, he was an exile all his life. What urged him to undertake his wide travels we do not know. Possibly an early outburst of prejudice against the Jews of his native town made him fear a troubled future in Spain. Possibly it was poverty that sent him abroad to seek his fortune in distant lands, for he has left evidence that he was not prosperous. "I strive to become wealthy", he wrote whimsically, "but the stars are opposed to me. If I were to take to shroud-making, men would leave off dying; or if I made candles, the sun would never set until I gave it up." But whether it was because he found himself unable to make a livelihood at home or not, it is certain that, once he had started upon his travels, his restless and inquiring spirit kept him journeying from land to land. And this very restlessness of his was of incalculable benefit to the Jews of his day. For at a time when the achievements of the scholars of one country were little known beyond the borders of that country, Abraham ibn Ezra carried the rich treasures of Spanish-Jewish learning into far distant communities, which, but for him, would have remained ignorant of the lore of the Jews of Spain. He visited Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Babylon, Italy, France, and England. Wherever there were Jews, they gathered around him in large numbers, charmed by his learning and his wit; and from him they gained a knowledge of the broad culture and the philosophical outlook of the Spanish Jew and, above all, of his intelligent appreciation of the Bible.

A Wandering Teacher.

In spite of his restless wandering, Abraham ibn Ezra

found time to be very active as a writer, and his works show the variety of his attainments. For he was a man of exceptionally wide learning, and, like the other great Spanish Jews of his time, was mathematician and astronomer, as well as Hebrew grammarian and Bible commentator. He translated Arabic works into Hebrew, thereby making the Jews of Christian Europe acquainted with the culture of the Mohammedans. An algebraic text-book of his was translated into Latin and made his name as familiar to non-Jews as to Jews. The Jews, however, were less interested in the great mathematician than they were in the great Bible critic. They read his grammatical text-books, in which he gave the Jews outside Spain the knowledge of the construction and use of Hebrew which his learned countrymen had gained, and which is so essential to a correct and thorough understanding of the Bible. They read his works on religious philosophy, one, for example, defending the great Jewish philosopher Saadia from adverse criticism.

His Varied Writings.

But most important of all his works is his Biblical commentary, which covers almost the entire Bible, and is regarded as the most noteworthy Bible commentary of the Spanish period. It shows his unusual learning, especially his masterly knowledge of the Hebrew language. It shows his clear insight and his bold and original power of thought. Few difficulties escaped his sharp eyes. He explained obscure words and made dark passages clear. In the introduction to his commentary on the Pentateuch he expressed his opinion of all the Biblical critics who had preceded him and thus stated the principles which, in his estimation, should govern all Bible commentary. The Gaonim, he wrote, had introduced into their commentaries material that was not necessary, and had thus made them too long. The Karaites, he held, were wrong in thinking that they could understand the Bible without the aid of

His Biblical Commentary.

tradition: Ibn Ezra believed that tradition was indispensable to a correct interpretation of the Bible. Many commentators, he pointed out, had read allegorical meanings into the Bible and had woven fantastical interpretations about the simplest words of the Holy Book. All these mistakes Ibn Ezra tried to avoid. His aim was to make the text clear in a simple, natural, reasonable way—in much the same manner, in fact, as that in which Rashi had written about a half century earlier; except that Rashi had added to the simple sense of the passage the fanciful meaning of which Ibn Ezra disapproved. And like Rashi's works, Ibn Ezra's also inspired many students to a careful, scholarly consideration of the Bible.

His Boldness of Thought.

Ibn Ezra's commentary was further remarkable for the boldness and independence with which the Spanish critic allowed his keen mind to work upon the problems of the sacred text. Thus he suggested, although but vaguely, that several passages in the Torah belong to a period later than that of Moses, the great lawgiver; and his brilliant commentary on Isaiah shows that he believed chapters XL-LXVI to have been written, not by that Isaiah who began his inspired preaching "in the year that King Uzziah died," but by another who lived and taught at the end of the Babylonian exile.

His Character.

Because of Ibn Ezra's restless, unsettled spirit, he has been very differently judged by different people. His inner life was no less changeful than his outer life. He lacked the concentration, the balance, the unswerving devotion of Judah Halevi. He never succeeded in determining for himself a definite, consistent attitude towards the problems of life. Here he is conservative and clings to tradition; there he is radical and strikes out into uncharted seas of thought. Now he makes a statement about ethics or morality that is true not only for his day, but for all time; and again he shows himself hampered

by mediaeval delusions, as when he accepts astrology, that popular superstitution of the Middle Ages. Just as he traveled from land to land, content in none, so he went from subject to subject, his active mind always glancing off towards matters only slightly connected with the theme on which he happened to be writing. Brilliant as he was, he lacked the concentration and continuity of thought necessary for an exhaustive treatise, and so his writings are often rather collections of illuminating notes than completed essays. But all this is merely saying that he was Abraham ibn Ezra, and that he suffered from the defects that often go with the characteristic merits of his temperament. To close our account of him on a note more gracious and appreciative, let us remember that Robert Browning found in this Hebrew sage the character for one of his noblest poems, "Rabbi Ben Ezra". The English poet represents the Jewish philosopher in his old age, looking back, with large and patient vision, over a long and changeful life, and finding it all very good,—both youth with its restless aspirations and age with its meditative quiet.

His Importance To-day.

Ibn Ezra was himself a poet, too, and although he never achieved the harmony of thought and feeling and expression that are Judah Halevi's, yet his poems were treasured by the men of his time, many of whom praised them highly. He is known to history, however, less as the poet than as the traveling scholar who exerted a great and good influence on the Jewish thought of his day by spreading Jewish learning from Spain throughout the world; as the scientific student of the Hebrew language; and, most important, as the Biblical commentator who, continuing the method of Saadia, treated the text of the Bible in a thoroughly scholarly and scientific manner, and left the most noteworthy Spanish contribution to Biblical criticism. The scholars of all succeeding ages owe much to his pioneer work.

Again we may turn to Heine; this time because the appreciative lines in which he reproaches Jewish maidens for their ignorance of this Spanish-Jewish literature will serve to fix in our minds the names of the great men about whom we have been reading, although Heine's Ibn Ezra is not Abraham, but Moses, the poet.[1]

"If one asks the name most famous
In the glorious golden age,
Of the Jewish school of poets,
The Arabian Old-Spanish—

"For the starry trio asks them,
For Jehuda ben Halevy,
For great Solomon Gabirol,
Or for Moses Ibn Ezra—

"For such names if one should ask them,
Then they know not what to answer,
And the children stare dumbfounded,
Puzzled, stare with wondering eyes.

"I advise you strongly, dearest,
To retrieve those past omissions,
And to learn the Hebrew language.
Leave your theatres and concerts,

"And devote some years to study.
You will then with ease be able
In the ancient text to read them,
Ibn Ezra and Gabirol.

"And, of course, the great Halevy,
The triumvirate poetic,
Who of old the sweetest music
Drew from out the harp of David.

"In the realm of thought Gabirol
Shines, and pleases best the thinker,
While in art shines Ibn Ezra,
And thereby delights the artist;

[1]Translation by Margaret Armour.

"But Jehuda ben Halevy,
Both their attributes combining,
Is a great and glorious poet
And beloved of all alike."

Suggestions for Further Reading.

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XIII.

MOSES MAIMONIDES.

Persecution in Moorish Spain.

In the last years of the twelfth century there seemed to be no land to which the Jews could turn with satisfaction and pride, assured that here conditions were favorable to the development of Judaism, that here were counselors and guides, the spiritual leaders of the scattered people. Moorish Spain, which had held this proud position, now passed for a time into the control of fanatical Mohammedans from North Africa, brave soldiers, but uncouth men, contemptuous of the culture which the Jews shared with the gentler Mohammedans of Spain, and intolerant of any religion but their own. "No church and no synagogue" was their battle-cry, and they gave to Jews and to Christians alike the choice of exile or death. But while the Christians had only to go to Northern Spain, to the Christian communities there, where were the Jews to find a refuge? The same fate threatened them in almost all lands. In despair some Jews assumed the disguise of Mohammedanism. They attended public services in the mosques and acknowledged Mohammed with their lips, but in their hearts they were still Jews and in secret they still practised Jewish rites. Often this unwelcome mask of Mohammedanism was the price a man paid, not for his own life, but for the security of his children, his wife, and his aged parents. Still there were but few who thus bartered their spiritual freedom for the privilege of remaining in the

Moses Maimonides.

land which meant for them comparative safety, the land they loved with a devotion that no country except Palestine itself had ever inspired in them. The great majority did not lack the courage to follow the truth at any cost. Synagogues were destroyed, schools were scattered, and the faithful Jews of Southern Spain went out into the uncertainty and danger of their perilous exile.

It was in this time of persecution that there was born in Cordova, on Passover Eve, 1135, Moses ben Maimon. The boy came of a family of scholars. His father, like his ancestors for eight generations back, was a learned Talmudist and a member of the rabbinical college of Cordova. Like all cultured Spanish Jews, he took an interest in the sciences, knew mathematics and astronomy, and wrote books on these subjects as well as on Talmudical topics. It was from this gentle, scholarly father that the boy learned the Bible and the Talmud, and mathematics and astronomy. He was placed at an early age, too, under distinguished Arabic professors, who taught him science, medicine, and philosophy.

Moses ben Maimon.

He was only thirteen when Cordova fell into the hands of the African Mohammedans; and when the fanatics forced the Jews to choose between Islam and exile, his father chose for himself and his family the more heroic course. For years they wandered from place to place, first in Spain, then in Africa. Finally, they settled near Cairo, in Egypt. Here they were to suffer further misfortunes. First the father died. Then the brother, who supported the family by trading in precious stones, was lost at sea.

Exiles from Spain.

The health of Moses had been shattered by these repeated blows, but now the support of the family fell on his frail shoulders and he set out bravely to earn a livelihood. Like all the sages of his time he considered it wrong to use his religious learning as a

Physician to the Sultan.

means of earning money. Later the demands of a community upon its rabbi became so all-absorbing that a man could not follow a trade or a profession and at the same time minister to the spiritual needs of his congregation. But that time had not yet come, and it is pleasant to look back upon the Rabbi of Cairo among his patients like the Rabbi of Troyes in his vineyard. For Moses ben Maimon decided to become a physician, and gradually he became so favorably known that he attracted the notice of influential people and was appointed doctor at the court of the great Saladin, that learned, chivalrous Saladin with whom the pages of Sir Walter Scott's "Talisman" and Lessing's "Nathan the Wise" have made many readers pleasantly familiar. Famous physicians came to Cairo to see the great Jewish doctor. Poets sang his praises. His chief merits seem to have been that he recognized how deeply the health of the body is affected by the health of the mind, and that he realized how much better it is for a physician to prevent illness than to cure it. Indeed, according to an Arabian historian, he was sought as court doctor by no less a personage than Richard the Lionhearted, but he declined the honor.

From a letter which he wrote to a friend we may gain an idea of the busy life he led:

His Busy Life.

"My duties to the Sultan are very heavy. I am obliged to visit him every day, early in the morning; and when he, or any of his children, or any of the inmates of his harem, are indisposed, I dare not quit Cairo" [about one mile and a half from his home in Fostat], "but must stay during the greater part of the day in the palace. It also frequently happens that one or two of the royal officers fall sick, and I must attend to their healing. Hence, as a rule, I repair to Cairo very early in the day, and even if nothing unusual happens, I do not return to Fostat until the afternoon. Then I am almost dying with hunger. I find the ante-chamber filled with people, both Jews

and Gentiles, nobles and common people, judges and bailiffs, friends and foes—a mixed multitude, who await the time of my return.

"I dismount from my animal, wash my hands, go forth to my patients, and entreat them to bear with me while I partake of some slight refreshment, the only meal I take in the twenty-four hours. Then I attend to my patients, write prescriptions and directions for their various ailments. Patients go in and out until nightfall, and sometimes even, I solemnly assure you, until two hours and more in the night. I converse with them and prescribe for them while lying down from sheer fatigue; and when night falls I am so exhausted that I can scarcely speak.

"In consequence of this, no Israelite can have any private interview with me, except on the Sabbath. On that day, the whole congregation, or, at least, the majority of the members, come to me after the morning service, when I instruct them as to their proceedings during the whole week. We study together a little until noon, when they depart. Some of them return and read with me after the afternoon service until evening prayers. In this manner I spend that day. I have here related to you only a part of what you would see if you were to visit me."

Arduous as were his duties as physician, his wonderful industry enabled him, as may be seen from his letter, to take a leading part in the affairs of the Jewish community of Cairo, and also to answer hundreds of questions addressed to him from all parts of the world. For by this time the fame of his learning and his piety was in every land. He tells us that he never failed to reply to any of these letters, except when he was too ill to write, and that he always answered with his own hand, never using a secretary, lest he be suspected of arrogance. Recent discoveries in Cairo have brought to light many questions addressed to Moses ben Maimon (whom, by the

Leader of his People.

way, we may now call by the better-known name given to him—Maimonides) with his autograph answers attached. These replies were always clear and concise, and showed Maimonides' sympathy and good sense, and even a touch of humor.

An Example of his Responsa.

The Jews of Arabia, for example, cruelly persecuted by the intolerant Mohammedans of that country, and pitifully perplexed because of their vague religious knowledge, wrote to him for advice. A man, they told him, had arisen who declared himself the Messiah. Maimonides' reply is famous. He appealed to their faith to keep them patient and long-suffering through trials that he urged them to accept as the tests of Providence.

The Most Famous Man of Letters of Spanish Judaism.

But in spite of all these activities, which might well have filled all the waking hours of a man of less energy and capacity, Maimonides gave his best endeavor and the precious leisure of his busy life to writings on matters of importance to Judaism, writings which make his fame overshadow that of all the other philosophers and the grammarians and the poets of Spanish Judaism, writings which make him the greatest of the great men of his time.

His Commentary on the Mishnah.

With his clear and logical mind, he realized early in life that the ordinary Israelite could not be expected to give to the study of the Law the time necessary for its complete understanding. The Mishnah was obscure. The discussions of its precepts often made it even more difficult for the man of little scholarship to get the gist and application of the rulings. How then was the man of the people to follow the guidance of the Law in every detail of his daily life? To meet this very practical need, Maimonides wrote his first important work, his commentary on the Mishnah. He wrote it in Arabic, for that was the native tongue of the Eastern Jew. He omitted all subtle, detailed discussions of views that were no longer

applicable to the actual life of the Jew. He explained correctly and clearly passages that had puzzled even the Gaonim, applying to his interpretation of the language of the Mishnah those rules of Hebrew grammar that Spanish scholarship had contributed to Jewish learning. He often explained a point by referring to the principles of such sciences as mathematics and physics. In addition to quoting the interpretations which he found in the Talmud itself, he used the works of all his learned predecessors, and even bravely and independently used his own judgment when he could find no authority to help him. Nor was his commentary a mere series of scattered notes. He provided prefaces for several treatises of the Mishnah, and he wrote for the entire commentary a general introduction in which he discussed the origin and plan of the Mishnah, and gave an account of the development of the oral law.

Nor did he limit himself to an explanation of the Mishnah and a statement of the authoritative decision in each case; on the contrary, he seized every opportunity to expose abuses and to correct superstitions and errors. Thus he reproached those who wore charms and amulets.

His Correction of Superstitions.

In one of his most famous comments he tried to state the principles upon which the Jewish religion rests, giving them in Thirteen Articles of Faith. This was the first time that any philosopher had undertaken the statement of a Jewish system of belief. Perhaps Maimonides felt it necessary to define Judaism in order to show the difference between Judaism on the one hand and Christianity and Mohammedanism on the other. This creed, then, could be used in the synagogue whenever it was found necessary to differentiate the Jewish religion from other religions. Certainly the articles are so worded as to emphasize the distinction between Judaism and the two daughter religions. Later philosophers formulated

His Thirteen Articles of Faith.

the fundamental principles of our faith somewhat differently. Not exactness of creed, however, but perfection of life is the essence of Judaism. And although it would seem that Maimonides set up with his creed a rigid system which would dominate the beliefs and opinions of men, in reality he did no such thing. His creed did not fetter Jewish thought; and Jewish emphasis remained on religious and moral conduct, and not on any confession of faith. His creed was accepted as the official statement of the belief of the Synagogue, and it is incorporated in the Jewish ritual in prose and in verse. In it he declares Jewish belief in (1) the existence of a Creator; (2) in His unity (as against the Trinity of the Christian faith); (3) in His spirituality (as against any attempt to embody Him in a man); (4) in His eternity; (5) in His absolute claim to our worship (again in contradistinction to Christianity); (6) in prophecy; (7) in the supremacy of the prophet Moses (a challenge to Mohammed's claim); (8 and 9) in the permanence and unalterability of the Law revealed to Moses at Sinai (an answer to the Christian assertion that the New Testament superseded the Jewish Scriptures); (10) in God's omniscience—that He knows all, and (11) that He rewards and punishes justly; (12) in the coming of a Messiah (again differing sharply from the Christian belief that he had already come); and (13) in the resurrection of the dead, a statement of belief that has been variously interpreted, and that we accept to-day as an assertion of confidence in immortality.

His "Mishneh Torah."

The compilation of the Mishnah commentary led Maimonides to begin a second great work. Now that the Law had been interpreted, it was still necessary to bring order and system into it by arranging it according to subject matter. The laws in Bible, Talmud, and later Jewish literature are not systematically arranged. A command concerning divine worship may stand beside an injunction of criminal law, and a rule of hygiene,

perhaps, next to that. Speedy reference, therefore, to any law was impossible for the average man, and difficult even for the scholar. Maimonides himself, he tells us, was sometimes at a loss to decide quickly and definitely just where a given law might be found. In his "Mishneh Torah" or "Repetition of the Law" therefore, he collected into one work all the laws to be found in the Bible and the Talmud, in the Responsa of the Gaonim, and in the writings of Palestinian, Spanish, and French teachers; and these laws, expressed simply and briefly, he arranged according to their content. In one book, for example, he gave all the laws connected with agriculture; in another he gave the entire code of the criminal law; in still another, civil law; and so on. His work forms the first complete classification of Jewish law from all sources.

Its Spirituality.

But the "Mishneh Torah" is even more than a clear, practical, systematic legal code. Its grasp of the general principles of justice and humanity underlying the almost innumerable details of the law, its emphasis on the spirituality of Judaism, its unwearying reference back to the starting point—God's justice and mercy and man's duty to act always with the love of God as his sole motive and his only reward,—these are the noble qualities which make one writer say of it: "The marvel of the book is that this golden thread of the spirit runs unbroken through all the ritual details with which the Code abounds."

Its Influence.

The fame of the "Mishneh Torah" spread rapidly. Hundreds of scribes were soon copying it; urgent demands for it came from every land. Many hailed it with welcome, declaring that no one had done such service to the Law since the days of Rabbi Judah the Prince, the compiler of the Mishnah. They called it "Yad Hachazakah", "The Strong Hand." This praise, however, was by no means unanimous. There was much opposition to the "Mishneh Torah", both during Maimonides' lifetime and after. Some feared that his simple, classified reproduction

Illuminated page from the
"Yad Hachazaka"
of Moses Maimonides.
(15th century.)

of the Talmud would lessen the study of the Talmud in the original. Others feared that Maimonides would become the autocrat of Jewish life, and that through his Code the traditional laws would become rigid, unyielding, inflexible. But no such disastrous result followed, for most people steered a sane middle course between those who praised over-much and those who blamed. These did not accept Maimonides' decisions as absolutely final and not subject to modification, but "cheerfully saw in him a new guide to set beside the old, a fresh aid to the study of the old lore with which their life was wrapped up." Through this work he became the chief authority of the Jewish world.

His "Guide of the Perplexed."

Now that he had explained the Mishnah clearly and had codified all Biblical and rabbinical laws, he turned his attention to those perplexed men who were puzzled by the questions which the thinking mind asks anew in each generation—questions about God and destiny, about the duty of man, about religion and philosophy. The object of this third great work, the "Guide of the Perplexed", or "Moreh Nebuchim"—to call it by its Hebrew title—was, as Maimonides himself explained, to "guide those religious persons who, adhering to the Torah, have studied philosophy, and are embarrassed by the contradiction between the teachings of philosophy and the literal sense of the Torah." It was the same task that Philo had set himself long before in Alexandria, and Saadia in Babylonia. The Jewish-Greek philosopher had tried to reconcile Judaism with the teachings of Plato and his followers, the prevailing philosophy of *his* day; the Jewish-Arabic scholar, with the Aristotelian and Moslem thought of *his* time; and now Maimonides tried to harmonize Judaism with the philosophy of Aristotle as it was taught by the Mohammedans of *his* time. Maimonides, however, was no blind follower of Aristotle, but, on the contrary, showed an independence

of thought rare in his age, when all other scholars slavishly accepted the conclusions of the great Greek thinker.

In the "Moreh Nebuchim" Maimonides accepted philosophy as an aid in the search for the truth. For him, reason and faith led to the same result. To his mind, there could be no contradiction between the truths which God has revealed to His prophets and the truths which the human intellect, a power derived from God, has discovered by process of reason. With few exceptions, he saw nothing in the philosophy of his day that he could not find, differently expressed, in the Bible and the Talmud. And, on the other hand, he saw nothing in the Bible nor in the whole range of rabbinical literature that, if properly explained, contradicted the findings of philosophy. Religion and the philosophy of his day, he pointed out, both recognize the existence of a Creator; both seek to guide mankind to the highest good. God is the Creator, a perfect Unity. He is incorporeal; and when He is spoken of in the Bible as having eyes or hands, these phrases are to be interpreted allegorically or figuratively, as concrete ways of expressing the abstract ideas of God's omniscience and His power. The object of all Biblical precepts is morality; the value of the sacrificial laws, for example, lies solely in the prayers and devotion which accompany them, the sacrifices themselves being merely temporary concessions to the habits and customs of the people who lived at the time when these laws were made.

Philosophy an Aid in the Search for the Truth.

Concerning prophecy, Maimonides taught that God does not arbitrarily choose a man to be His prophet. The man must first prepare himself intellectually and morally, so that by his love of truth and by the purity of his life he makes himself worthy to be God's messenger. Then God selects him to bear His message. This teaching is anticipated in the Bible, where we read, "And Moses said, 'I will now turn aside to see this great

His Teaching Concerning Prophecy.

sight, why the bush is not burnt.' And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him from the midst of the bush." It was not until Moses had taken the first step that God called to him. Man prepares, and then God chooses him.

The Influence of the "Guide" upon the Jews.

Thus Maimonides went on, bringing the philosophy of the twelfth century into harmony with the principles of Judaism, and presenting the laws of Judaism as rational, logical, and uplifting. Through the "Moreh Nebuchim" many a doubter was convinced that the teachings of Judaism could stand the criticism of the philosophers. Maimonides' "Guide" was a true guide to the perplexed of his day, and although systems of philosophy have come and gone since, it remains in many respects a guide through the perplexities and problems of every age. For Maimonides had a mind which, although it was necessarily influenced by the modes of thinking of his day, was not bound down by the limitations of any one period; it responded to the intellectual necessities of all ages.

Its Influence upon Mohammedan and Christian Thought.

Nor was it only among the Jews that the "Moreh Nebuchim" was received with admiration; so great a thinker was Maimonides that his work had an influence on European thought much more powerful than is usually acknowledged. Mohammedan scholars wrote commentaries on it; Mohammedan teachers lectured on it to their students. From its original Arabic it was translated into Hebrew and then into Latin, and in this form, like Ibn Gabirol's "Fons Vitae", it largely influenced Christian thought. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of the mediaeval theologians of the Catholic Church, used it as a model for his own work. Christian scholars owned their indebtedness to Maimonides and almost accepted him as one of the authorities of the church.

Such a book as the "Moreh Nebuchim", however, could not go unchallenged. In every age there are always two

Maimonists and Anti-Maimonists.

attitudes of mind,—a progressive and a conservative; and the conservative Jews, looking with suspicion upon philosophy, assailed Maimonides' views. To them he seemed to be advocating opinions which did not agree with the teachings of Jewish tradition. His errors, therefore, they felt they must strenuously oppose and condemn. The progressive element, on the other hand, accepted Maimonides as teacher and master. Thus two hostile parties arose, the Maimonists, or followers of Maimonides, and the anti-Maimonists, his opponents.

Such mutual discussion is often stimulating and helpful, but this controversy raged too bitterly for scholarly interchange of opinion. Some of Maimonides' opponents went so far as to forbid the study of his book, and to call its author a heretic. At last, indeed, misguided zealots referred the dispute to Christian authorities for settlement, and these ordered that Maimonides' works be burned. The very violence of the conflict, however, recalled the hostile parties to a saner, calmer view. Gradually the strenuous opposition faded away. The "Moreh Nebuchim" came to be accepted by the conservative, as well as by the progressive. It remained the "Guide" for the enlightened of all centuries, and its study produced philosophers like Spinoza and Moses Mendelssohn.

In spite of the bitter attacks of his opponents, Maimonides went quietly on with his laborious life. He never grew angry at sincere opposition; he acted always with dignified self-restraint and large-minded patience. In fact, as much might be said of his character as of his unusual knowledge and masterly intellect. Like Hillel, he was modest and gentle, and kept an even temper, as we have seen, even in disputes. He was broad-minded; he believed, in that age of intolerance and persecution, that the good of all creeds and all nations have a share in the life to come. He was profoundly earnest; he regarded life, not as an opportunity for pleasure, but as

The Most Intellectual of the Great Rabbis.

a serious opportunity to labor nobly. Every moment must be spent profitably. Maimonides never relaxed even so far as to enjoy poetry. It is, therefore, chiefly as the most intellectual of the great rabbis, as the most deeply philosophical of the religious thinkers that he is remembered. Emotion he lacked—the passion and the tenderness that won for Judah Halevi not only admiration and reverence, but also personal affection and enthusiastic devotion. But penetration that cut through every obscurity; a genius for classification that could bring system into any material, however scattered and confused it may have been; unwearying industry that found no labor too difficult or too prolonged,—all these he had, and a characteristically Jewish spirit that found expression in the fundamental principle of his life: "Know the God of thy father and serve Him." These qualities made men say of him, "From Moses to Moses there has been none like Moses." From Moses the great Law-giver to Moses Maimonides no one had appeared to equal these great leaders.

Moses Maimonides died in 1204, mourned by both Jews and Mohammedans. He had accomplished great things.

Commentator, Codifier, and Conciliator.

No Jewish commentator or philosopher exercises a more many-sided or lasting influence; he made clear and orderly the confused masses of the Law so that by his commentary and by his code the Jew might know how to govern his life according to the wisdom of many generations; he brought together the truths of religion and philosophy so that through his "Guide" many a Jewish intellect was taught to think in a spirit of reverent inquiry. It may help one to remember his three-fold service to his race and to humanity, if one connects with the name of Moses Maimonides three titles, each beginning with the letter C, and thinks of him as the great Commentator, the great Codifier, the great Conciliator.

After the time of Maimonides, Arabic ceased to be the language of Jewish thought, and in order that the works of

The Tibbon Family.

Maimonides and, indeed, all the Jewish classics written in Arabic might be accessible to the Jews of Europe, it was necessary to translate them into Hebrew. This need brought forth a host of translators. Of these the most famous were the Tibbon family. As early as the latter half of the twelfth century, Judah ibn Tibbon was performing the task of translating into Hebrew the works of Bachya, ibn Gabirol, and Halevi. Maimonides speaks very flatteringly of Judah in a letter to Judah's son, and this son justly calls Judah "the father of translators." The title, "chief of translators", has also been applied to him.

Samuel ibn Tibbon.

His greater son, Samuel ibn Tibbon, who was born about 1150 and died about 1230, was an enthusiastic follower of Maimonides. He translated many of the works of Maimonides, including the "Guide of the Perplexed", to which he owes his greatest fame. Indeed, this work is usually referred to by the Hebrew title which Samuel ibn Tibbon gave it, "Moreh Nebuchim." His translation is distinguished for its faithfulness to the original.

Nor were the members of the Tibbon family translators alone. Some of them wrote original works besides. Judah wrote a work on rhetoric and grammar and left a will which gives us an interesting insight into his character. In it he refers to his library as his "best treasure", his "best companion", and to his book-shelves as "the most beautiful pleasure-gardens." Samuel wrote a philosophical commentary, in the manner of Maimonides, on Ecclesiastes and on the Song of Songs. His greatest work, however, is his translation of the "Guide of the Perplexed." As a result of the work of these translators, the books of those Jews who wrote in Arabic, instead of being confined to lands of Mohammedan culture, became accessible to all who read Hebrew.

Suggestions for Further Reading.

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XIV.

NACHMANIDES.

In the struggle that raged about Maimonides there was no more commanding figure than Moses ben Nachman, or Nachmanides, as he is commonly called. He was born about the year 1195 in a little town in northern Spain. He belonged to the best Jewish families of the community, and he is said to have studied under the greatest teachers of his time. Like so many Spanish Jews, he applied himself to medicine and later practised it as a means of livelihood. He acquired also a knowledge of philosophical literature. But his chief field of labor was the Talmud, which was all in all to him. For his birthplace, although in Spain, was distinguished, not for its philosophers, like the great southern cities of Granada, Barcelona, and Toledo, but rather, like neighboring France, for the great Talmudists that it produced. The boy grew up, therefore, under the influence, not of Spanish philosophy, but of French scholarship, and his natural piety made him particularly sympathetic to it.

Early Life.

His distinguished kinsmen and masters must have been well satisfied with the lad's progress, for when he was only fifteen years old he began to write treatises on Talmudical subjects, in which he showed so remarkable an intimacy with the Talmud that even while he was still very young he was counted among the Talmudical authorities of his time. These studies

Intimate Knowledge of the Talmud.

in the Talmud he continued through all the earlier part of his life. He wrote explanations of the Talmud in the style of the French rabbis; summaries of certain parts of the Law, much in the manner of Maimonides; and loyal defences of earlier authorities against the criticism of a later generation. In these works he shows qualities that distinguish all his writings, not only a profound knowledge of rabbinical literature, but also the deepest veneration for earlier authorities. In his eyes the only course of wisdom for the scholars of his day was to study reverently the literature of their great ancestors. Not only to the Bible and the Talmud did he turn for instruction and guidance, but also to the Gaonim and even the rabbis of still later generations; and in their light he regarded all the problems of life.

His Attitude towards the Mystical.

All this represents a very different attitude towards life and religion from that shown by Maimonides. Maimonides applied to religion the standards of the philosophy of his time, interpreting Judaism in the clear, cold light of reason and logic. For Nachmanides, on the other hand, religion was radiant with a warm glow of feeling. The tendency to eliminate from religion all that is mystical, all that makes an appeal to loving, reverent, unquestioning faith rather than to analytical intelligence grieved him. The "Moreh Nebuchim" had encouraged the followers of the Greek-Arabic philosophy among the Jews to understand as allegorical all the stories in the Bible that had in them an element of the miraculous. But to Nachmanides the mystical and the miraculous were the holiest and most beautiful parts of religion.

His Warm Humanity.

Nor was he more in sympathy with the ethical philosophy of Maimonides than with his religious views. Maimonides sought to raise man above the accidents of fortune by reminding him of his high origin and his future destiny. To arm him against the disappointments and sorrows of life, the philosopher tried to

render man indifferent to pleasure and to pain. This aloofness Nachmanides rejected. He opposed to it the more warmly human doctrine that "man should rejoice on the day of joy, and weep on the day of sorrow."

His Place in the Dispute about Maimonides.

But much as Nachmanides disapproved Maimonides' views, his character was too gentle and his respect for the Jewish philosopher too profound to permit him to join the violent opponents of the great man. Rather he attempted to act as a peace-maker and to bring together the warring factions. In a letter to the rabbis of France he drew attention to the many virtues and the great merits of Maimonides and pointed out that the "Guide" was intended, not for those whose hearts were happy in perfect faith and unshaken belief, but for those bewildered by a newly won philosophy that they could not without help reconcile with the old, familiar teachings.

His Independence of Thought.

Although Nachmanides looked with disfavor upon the philosophy of his day, he did not, however, encourage blind, unreasoning belief. "Notwithstanding my desire to follow the earlier authorities," he said, "to assert and maintain their views, I do not consider myself a 'donkey carrying books.' I will explain their methods and appreciate their value, but when their views can not be supported by me, I will plead, though in all modesty, my right to judge according to the light of my eyes."

Nachmanides and the Cabala.

If, however, Nachmanides saw the necessity of explaining earlier authorities, and if, in explaining them, he would not have recourse to the philosophy of Maimonides, where was he to find the method whereby he must interpret? He sought it in a mystical theory, known as Cabala or Tradition, by which the statements of sacred literature were invested with a deep, mysterious meaning—a method of reading Holy Writ by reading *into* it all the fancies, the dreams, and the passions of the human heart. Because of this miraculous, mystic, emo-

tional element, the Cabala attracted Nachmanides. And so we have the apparent contradiction of a scholar whose clear mind could pierce every obscurity of the Talmud, but whose warm heart found inspiration in the mystic lore of the Cabala. The fact that so devout a sage, so subtle and keen-witted a thinker was a believer in the Cabala, gave great weight to this mode of interpreting the Bible and won it many followers. Accordingly we have still another point of view added to those from which devout men were attempting, in very different ways, to understand and apply their religion. In France were the strict Talmudists, who occupied themselves almost entirely with the study of the Halachah. In Spain were the philosophers, who, following Maimonides, strove to interpret Judaism in accordance with the prevailing thought of the day. And now, encouraged by the great authority of Nachmanides, we have still another attitude towards religion, that of the Cabalists, who saw their Judaism through the twilight of mysticism.

His Commentary on the Pentateuch.

The later writings of Nachmanides reveal, more clearly than his early Talmudical studies, his particular attitude towards the problems of religion, and give us an insight into his system of explaining them. The greatest of all his works, the one into which he put his finest thoughts and his noblest feelings, is his Commentary on the Pentateuch. Its purpose, he said, was "to appease the mind of the students, laboring under persecution and troubles, when they read the portion on Sabbaths and festivals, and to attract their heart by simple explanations and sweet words." The "simple explanations" occupy a considerable space in the book, and Nachmanides spared no pains to base them on a thorough knowledge of all that his age knew of philology and archaeology. The "sweet words", however, are the most prominent and characteristic feature of his Commentary. Sweet and comforting indeed to his contemporaries must have been such words

as we read at the end of the "Song of Moses" (Deuteronomy xxxii): "And behold there is nothing conditional in this song. It is a charter testifying that we shall have to suffer heavily for our sins, but that, nevertheless, God will not destroy us, being reconciled to us, though we shall have no merits, and forgiving our sins for His name's sake alone. . . . And so our rabbis said, 'Great is this song, embracing as it does both the past of Israel and the future, this world and the world to come.'"

"The Fruits of the Torah."

Nachmanides found in the Torah various meanings. He maintained that all knowledge and wisdom are "the fruits of the Torah, or the fruits of these fruits." "For every glory and every wonder and every deep mystery are hidden in the Torah, and in her treasures is sealed every beauty of wisdom." Not only moral lessons, but also cabalistic and symbolical meanings he drew from its narratives. In the Torah he saw a foreshadowing of the history of humanity. The account of the six days of creation, for example, he interpreted as a prophecy of the most important events that would occur during the succeeding six thousand years; and the Sabbath was to him a promise of the millenium in the seventh thousand, which will be the day of the Lord.

His Attitude Towards Miracles.

Miracles he raised to a place in the regular scheme of things. The Ten Plagues in Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea are one kind of miracles, manifest miracles. In addition to these there are hidden miracles which we do not perceive as such because of their frequency. All of the events of our daily life are miracles worked by the direct will of God. This unbroken chain of miracles implies God's presence to perform them, a close and intimate contact between the Deity and the world. This special concern of God for mankind Nachmanides emphasized. With this warm, loving, human theology he sought to edify the minds of his readers, to make life more sweet

and death less terrible. Now and then he permitted them a glimpse into the mystical realm in which he himself loved to move; but these glances into the unknown were few, and he warned the people of the folly and danger of letting their minds brood over-long upon the mystical. He liked better to lead them rapidly on to some more practical and helpful lesson.

This loving helpfulness, this warm humanity, is very characteristic of Nachmanides. We find it again in his opposition to the philosophers who look with scorn upon all human pleasures and impulses. He held that everything created by God, not only soul, but also body, is good and perfect. Indeed, Robert Browning might have been speaking for Nachmanides when he made his Jewish rabbi say:

"All Good Things are Ours."

"Let us not always say,
'Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh
Helps soul!"

Nachmanides went happily on with his busy life as physician, rabbi, teacher, and writer, surrounded by his family and his pupils, and so reverenced by all his neighbors that we are told "his words were held in Catalonia in almost as high authority as the Scriptures." Then suddenly, when he was well advanced in years, this peaceful life was interrupted by an event which tore the venerable rabbi away from his family and his native land, and sent him forth an exile.

A convert to Christianity, one Pablo Christiani, was journeying about among the Jewish communities, seeking to convince his former co-religionists that they should accept Jesus as the Messiah. After many vain attempts to make

converts, he appealed to King James of Aragon to command the most famous rabbi of Spain, who was, of course, Nachmanides, to meet him in public debate on the relative merits of Judaism and Christianity. If he could silence their foremost rabbi, he would surely be successful with the Spanish Jews. The apostate relied for his victory on the reserve that a Jew would be compelled to maintain through fear of arousing the anger of the Christians, and he confidently assured the king that he could force Nachmanides to admit the justice of the Messianic claims of Jesus.

A Public Disputation.

Although Nachmanides knew that, whatever the result of the controversy, the end would be persecution of his people, he had to obey the order of the king. He stipulated, however, that perfect freedom of speech should be granted him; and when King James' confessor told him that he must not take advantage of his liberty of speech to revile Christianity, he replied with dignity that he knew the rules of common courtesy. And throughout the disputation, which lasted for four days, he conducted himself nobly, a representative of whom the religion he was defending might well be proud. At Barcelona, in the palace of the king, the solemn discussion took place. On one side were ranged the king, the court, distinguished ecclesiasts, knights, and citizens, in all the pomp and splendor of mediaeval display. Against them all stood Nachmanides, and among the courtly audience an occasional Jew followed the proceedings breathlessly, forgetting, perhaps, in his interest in the arguments, the haunting fear of what must follow.

A Noble Representative of Judaism.

At the outset Nachmanides clearly defined the points to be discussed. The differences between Judaism and Christianity were so numerous that it was advisable to pay attention only to the most essential. The topics which he suggested, therefore, were (1)

The Points at Issue.

whether the Messiah had come; (2) whether the Messiah, according to the prophecies in the Bible, was to be considered as God or man, and (3) whether Judaism or Christianity was the true faith.

From the very beginning, Nachmanides disarmed his antagonist, whose arguments were based on passages quoted from the Haggadah, by declaring the Haggadah to be only a series of sermons, expressing the individual opinions of the rabbis, and thus having no binding authority with the Jew, who could accept them or reject them at his will.

The Haggadah no Authority.

Having refuted the statement that the Talmud recognized Jesus as the Messiah, Nachmanides went on to prove that the Prophets regarded the Messiah as a man and not as a divinity, and that their promises of a Messianic era of universal peace and justice had certainly not yet been fulfilled. On the contrary, since the appearance of Jesus the world had been filled with violence and injustice, and of all denominations the Christians were the most warlike. Then, turning to the king, Nachmanides had the courage to say, "It behooves thee and thy knights, O king, to put an end to all thy war-making, as the beginning of the Messianic era demands."

The Messianic Promises.

Nachmanides pointed out further that the question of the Messiah is not of such importance in the Jewish religion as the Christians imagine. The coming of the Messiah is not desired by the Jews as an end in itself. What makes them long for his appearance is the hope and belief that then they will witness a greater spread of purity and holiness than is now possible; that they will be better able to lead a righteous life after the will of God.

Question of the Messiah not of Primary Importance.

When Nachmanides had been debating with candor and with skill for three days, the Jews of Barcelona entreated him to break off the disputation, as they feared the resentful

persecution that might follow his success. Friendly Christians, too, counseled him to give no further provocation. The king, however, when Nachmanides made known to him these apprehensions, ordered him to proceed; and the controversy concluded in triumph for the Jew.

Triumph for the Jew.

Pablo, however, claimed the victory; and Nachmanides, from a sense of duty to those whom he represented, published a full and accurate report of the proceedings. From this publication Pablo selected certain passages which he interpreted as blaspheming Christianity. A formal complaint was lodged with the king, who was obliged to entertain the charge. Nachmanides defended himself, pleading that he had written nothing which he had not used before the king, and reminding the king that freedom of speech had been granted him. He urged that he ought not be condemned for expressing in writing anything that had remained unrebuked in his oral defense. The king acknowledged the justice of this, but to satisfy the clergy, Nachmanides was sentenced to banishment for two years, and his pamphlet was condemned to be burned. This punishment, however, the clergy found too mild, and by appealing to the Pope they seem to have succeeded in turning the two years' exile into perpetual banishment.

The Champion Banished.

At the age of seventy, Nachmanides left his fatherland, his school, his friends, his sons, and went into exile. It is not known where he found a home during the next three years; it is probable that he sought refuge with friends somewhere in Castile or in southern France. But we do know that in 1267 he left Europe and made his way to the Holy Land. Of his feelings on beholding the sacred city he himself wrote: "Oh! I am the man who saw affliction. I am banished from my table, far removed from friend and kinsman, and too long

In Jerusalem.

is the distance to meet again. . . . I left my family, I forsook my house. There with my sons and daughters, and with the sweet and dear children whom I have brought up on my knees, I left also my soul. My heart and my eyes will dwell with them forever. . . . But the loss of all this and of every other glory my eyes saw is compensated by having now the joy of being a day in thy courts, O Jerusalem, visiting the ruins of the Temple and crying over the ruined Sanctuary; where I am permitted to caress thy stones, to fondle thy dust, and to weep over thy ruins. I wept bitterly, but I found joy in my tears."

Nachmanides had gone to Jerusalem with the intense longing of Judah Halevi. He found the land desolate; the Jews were slain or scattered. But Nachmanides did more than mourn in the courts of the ruined Temple. He encouraged the pilgrims to the Holy Land to build synagogues and organize congregations. He gathered about him a circle of disciples. People came in great numbers to hear his lectures and sermons. It was in Palestine that the greater part of his Commentary on the Pentateuch was written. From Palestine he wrote letters home. Thus he forged a link between Judea and the western world, bringing the Oriental Jews the rich culture of Spain. Yet this busy and useful career in Palestine was not a long one. He lived there only about three years, for in 1270 he was dead.

A Link between Judea and the West.

No man except Maimonides exerted so strong an influence upon the Jews of his own time and succeeding ages. He made popular an attitude towards religion characterized by an unwavering devotion to Judaism, a deep reverence for the Talmud and rabbinical authorities, and a leaning towards the mysticism and the passionate religious yearnings of the Cabala. And this influence he gained, not so much through his writings as through his personality. The warmth of his humanity, his

His Influence.

loving desire to be of service to the humble, his tender compassion for all,—these were the traits that gained him his popularity and his influence. Some writers even assign to him a higher place than to Maimonides. But we need not attempt to measure the services of men so different. Judaism has need of both. It needs the profound mind bringing to the problems of life all the aid that philosophy can contribute, and it needs the loving heart that longs to make life sweeter and nobler for the vast majority of men; to guide humble, loyal, grateful souls to God.

Nachmanides as Poet.

Nachmanides was a poet, too; and a few stanzas from Alice Lucas' translation of his hymn for the New Year will show his love of God and his feeling of security in God's love of man:

"Thine is the love, O God, and Thine the grace,
That folds the sinner in its mild embrace:
Thine the forgiveness bridging o'er the space
'Twixt man's work and the task set by the King.

"Unheeding all my sins, I cling to Thee;
I know that mercy will Thy footstool be:
Before I call, O do Thou answer me,
For nothing dare I claim of Thee, my King.

"O Thou who makest guilt to disappear,
My help, my hope, my rock, I will not fear:
Though Thou the body hold in dungeon drear,
The soul has found the palace of the King."

Suggestions for Further Reading.

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XV.

RASHI.

The Jews of France and Germany.

While Hebrew statesmen, scientists, poets, and philosophers were making Spain famous in Jewish history, the Jews of France and Germany were working in humbler fashion, taking up the task that the Babylonian schools had laid down, following the early Gaonim, rather than Saadia, applying themselves to the study of the Law even more assiduously than did the Spanish scholars.

Their Early History.

In France and Germany Jews had settled early. Before the fifth century there were Jewish communities in the south of France; and although they were disturbed from time to time by the hostility of distrustful church councils and overzealous bishops, on the whole they led a peaceful, happy life. They supported themselves in the same manner as did the other inhabitants of the country; they were merchants and sailors; they cultivated fields and vineyards; they raised cattle; they practised every handicraft. In general, unlike the Jews of Spain, they were not permitted to take part in the government; but they were content to enjoy the fruits of their industry and the unmolested practice of their religion. Throughout France they lived in close and friendly intercourse with their neighbors, speaking the language of the land, following its customs, highly esteemed by both the people and their rulers.

The French Christians, among whom they were living,

were a simple people with none of the breadth of knowledge that distinguished the Mohammedans of Spain. Accordingly we do not find among the Jews of France the many-sided culture, the philosophy and poetry that flourished under the more congenial conditions in Spain. But it would be a serious mistake to think that the Jews of France were one whit inferior to their Spanish brethren in moral earnestness or in religious fervor. Their undivided attention they gave to the Bible and the Talmud; and for the very reason that the subjects to which they devoted themselves were less varied, they gained in them all the greater accuracy and depth of knowledge. As students of Bible and Talmud they were unsurpassed.

Students of Bible and Talmud.

For a long time they sent their young scholars to Sura and Pumbeditha to be instructed. All their religious difficulties they submitted to the learned men of the Eastern academies. Jewish traders who traveled to the Orient brought back not only rich embroideries and costly jewels, but also a more precious store of wisdom, the treasured answers of the Gaonim.

Pilgrims to the Eastern Academies.

At the end of the tenth century, however, at Mayence, in France, Rabbi Gershom ben Judah established a school where French and German Jews might study with him the Bible and the Talmud; and so clear and decisive were his comments that it was no longer necessary to send students and messengers on the long and laborious journey to Babylon. Instead, the scholars of France and Germany gathered around Gershom, whom they honored so highly that they called him Rabbenu, our Master, and also Light of the Exile, a name that still clings to him. Of him Rashi, the great man who continued his work, said: "Rabbenu Gershom has enlightened the eyes of Captivity; we all live by his instruction."

Rabbenu Gershom, Light of the Exile.

But all Rabbi Gershom's time was not spent in classroom instruction; his chief work was a Talmud commen-

His Talmud Commentary and his Decrees.

tary which made puzzling passages clear. He exerted also an important influence upon the social life of the Jews of Christian Europe through his *Decrees,* which were even more far-reaching in their effect than his commentary. He found that some of the laws to which the Jews had been accustomed in the East were more suitable to an oriental civilization than to the life of the West. These precepts Rabbi Gershom changed so as to fit them to the habits of the people of France and Germany. For example, he forbade polygamy. Another of his decrees made the conversion of non-Jews to Judaism easier than it had been before. In these ways Rabbi Gershom became the leader of the Jews in Christian Europe.

The disciples of Rabbi Gershom continued the work of their master, and in the greatest of his followers they found a guide to direct their further studies. This new leader was Solomon bar Isaac, or Rashi, as he is better known, according to a favorite Jewish method of naming great men by a combination of their initials, *R*abbi *S*olomon bar *I*saac becoming *Rashi.* About the life of Rashi little is definitely known; but because he was esteemed by his contemporaries as a man of great learning and noble character, and because the generations since his death have cherished his memory, people have always wanted to know all about the details of his life; and accordingly, where actual history fell short, popular imagination made the picture complete.

Rashi.

Rashi was born at Troyes, in France, in 1040, the year in which the academy at Pumbeditha was closed. The work left unfinished by the Babylonian schools was to be taken up and carried on by the French scholar, for, as the Talmud says, "When one star sets in Israel, another star rises on the horizon." Rashi's parents were poor, but they were noted for their piety and learning. From his father the young Solomon probably received his

The Young Student.

early education. Then, in spite of his poverty, his longing for knowledge led him to the celebrated schools in Mayence and Worms. Like Hillel and Akiba, he often went without bread, he often suffered from the cold for lack of warm clothing; but no hardship could daunt him in his devotion to study.

Legend has it that in his search for knowledge he made a tour of almost the whole world known to his time. It tells us that while he was journeying in the East he met a monk, with whom he fell into friendly conversation. Soon, however, his companion began to attack Judaism; and as Rashi warmly defended his religion, the travelers parted in anger. But that night, at the inn where both were staying, the monk was suddenly stricken with a dangerous illness; and Rashi, forgetting all unpleasantness, hurried to his bedside, and cared for him with the devotion of a brother until he was restored to health. Then the monk was eager to pour out his gratitude to Rashi; but the rabbi interrupted him, saying: "You owe me nothing. Divided though we are by our religions, we are united by the bonds of humanity and by love of our fellowmen, which Moses has commanded us as a duty. Farewell, and if you come upon a Jew in misfortune, help him as I have helped you."

Rabbi and Monk.

Later, when returning homeward, Rashi is said to have passed through Prague, in Bohemia. There the Jews rejoiced at the arrival of so distinguished a visitor, but unfortunately their happiness irritated a powerful noble who hated the Jews, and who seized this opportunity to grieve them by having the famous rabbi arrested as a spy. In vain the distressed congregation tried to secure Rashi's release. Bitterly it mourned the sad fate of its honored guest. Rashi himself, strong in his faith in God, remained calm and strove to comfort the sorrowing people. The day of the trial came, and the duke was about to pronounce the sentence of death,

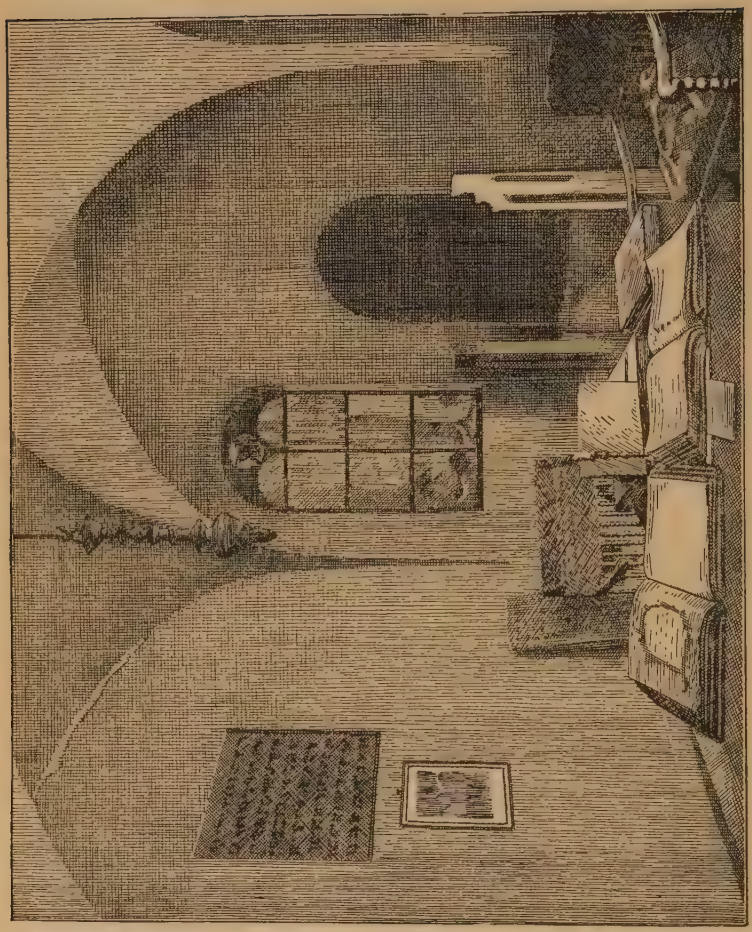
when his counsellor, a great bishop, raised his eyes, saw the prisoner, and at once stepped forward and cried: "In the name of God I protect and defend this Jew. Not a hair of his head shall be hurt, for he is not only a great scholar, but a noble, generous, and God-fearing man." The bishop was none other than the monk whom Rashi had befriended in the Orient. His intercession secured Rashi's safety and freedom. Indeed the duke went so far as to confer upon Rashi many distinctions and privileges, which he generously devoted to the betterment of the condition of the Jews in Prague. Tradition ends the story happily by adding that Rebecca, the daughter of Rashi's host, fell in love with him, and as his wife returned with him to Troyes.

Rashi at Worms.

Legend also tells us that at Worms the young Rashi spent the greater number of his years of study. There even to-day visitors are still shown, adjoining the synagogue, a small building called the Rashi Chapel, and a seat in a niche in the wall called the Rashi Chair. Recently the authorities of Worms named a street in their city after the great Jewish scholar.

Teacher and Leader.

And now he had completed his apprenticeship; master of all rabbinical learning, he returned to his native Troyes. Here, in recognition of his profound scholarship, the people honored him as their rabbi. Here he lectured on the Bible and the Talmud, and from all parts of France and Germany scholars flocked now to Troyes, rather than to Mayence or Worms. To Rashi the Jews of Christian Europe now turned for counsel and instruction in all problems more or less closely connected with religion. His answers to their questions show his character,—his piety, his gentleness, and his modesty, as well as his great learning. In them he never adopted a superior manner, never used a sarcastic expression. Nor did he hesitate to admit his own mistakes, even when it was one of his pupils who pointed them out to him. In his Responsa, for



The Rashi Chapel in Worms.

example, he wrote: "The same question has already been put to me, and I gave a faulty answer. But now I am convinced of my mistake, and I am prepared to give a decision better based on reason. I am grateful to you for having drawn my attention to the question; thanks to you, I now see the truth." In all, Rashi was the ideal rabbi of the period. Like most of the rabbis of his time, he accepted no pay for his services. Work in the vineyards about Troyes yielded him enough for his simple, frugal life. Teaching he made a labor of love. And in his school, master and pupil were equally devoted to their work. Entire days they spent in study, and often entire nights as well. Only when they had completed the study of a Talmudic treatise did they take time from their tasks for a little recreation. Their greatest pleasure they found in the delight of learning. These pictures that remain to us of Rashi as rabbi, as leader of the Jewish community, and as teacher, make us feel that if he had left us nothing but the remembrance of his life and character, even then his service to Judaism would have been great indeed.

Commentator.

Rashi, however, did not content himself with giving instruction only to students who came under his immediate influence in his class-room. He wished his teachings to reach also future generations. Accordingly he undertook the works that were to occupy him for the rest of his life—his commentaries on the Bible and the Talmud. In form they are not connected essays that can be read apart from the text they explain; they are rather notes upon words or phrases that are difficult to understand. For this task of explaining and interpreting, Rashi had all the qualities necessary for a great commentator. His mind was clear; his language was accurate and concise. Often he solved a difficulty with one well-chosen word. Frequently he paraphrased an expression, not in simpler Hebrew, but in the French of his time. And it is interesting to note

that from these scattered phrases modern students of language can build up the speech that was in common use among the people of France in Rashi's day.

His Commentary on the Bible.

In order to obtain a correct text of the Bible, Rashi laboriously compared manuscripts so that no mistake might creep in. He lacked, it is true, the scientific knowledge of the Hebrew language that distinguished the Spanish scholars; but he was as thorough a grammarian as was possible in his time and in his country, and he had that fine feeling for the spirit of the sacred tongue that comes from constant occupation with its literature. For material for his notes he turned to the Talmudic and Midrashic literature; but to what he obtained from these sources he freely added his own interpretations. It is worth remark that, long before such Biblical criticism had become current, it was he who said that the "servant of God" mentioned in certain chapters of the second part of the Book of Isaiah represents the whole people of Israel. In general, Rashi preferred the rational, literal explanation of his text; but when he had made a verse clear, he often added the charming Haggadic stories that clustered about it. So clear and interesting is his commentary on the Bible, so full of fascinating legends and even of witty sayings and kindly humor, that it is not a book for scholars alone; for centuries it has been the favorite book in Jewish homes, a storehouse of delightful traditions that without it would be unknown.

His Commentary on the Talmud.

Rashi's commentary on the Bible, then, is a popular work for general reading; his commentary on the Talmud, on the other hand, is a learned treatise for the serious use of students. He began, as he did with the Bible, by establishing a correct text, the result of careful and detailed revision of manuscripts. The material for his commentary was provided by tradition, by the accumulated learning of a long line of teachers that

had been passed on to him by his own masters. To this task, as to his work with the Bible, he carried a spirit of scrupulous exactness and precision. The language of the Talmud is often obscure. The lack of punctuation makes reading very difficult. No mark separates question from answer, one sentence from the other. Then, too, the Talmud often treats of unfamiliar questions. It mentions facts and customs that are no longer matters of common knowledge. For all these difficulties Rashi's commentary provides an explanation that is simple yet thorough.

But it was not given to Rashi to pass all the years of his studious life in tranquil application to the books that he loved.

The First Crusade.

His last years were darkened by the terrors of the first Crusade (1096). When the Crusaders swept across Europe to wrest the Holy Sepulchre from the Turks, many were undoubtedly inspired by their faith, by the zeal of their religious enthusiasm. Many more, however, were animated by no such lofty motives; some went to escape the punishment that awaited them at home for misdeeds committed; some were drawn by love of adventure; and the great mass were impelled by greed of plunder. Hordes of Crusaders on their way to the Holy Land robbed and massacred the Jews whom they encountered. In blind hate and bloody bigotry they threw themselves on the peaceful Jewish communities on the banks of the Rhine, and put to death all who refused to be converted. These awful massacres, the victims of which numbered not less than ten thousand, plunged the Jews of Germany and France into the deepest sorrow. Few preferred pretended conversion to a martyr's death.

At last the Crusaders were gone on their bloody way, and the Jews left could again breathe freely. Now those

Rashi's Tolerance.

who had allowed themselves to be baptized to escape martyrdom could return to their ancestral faith. Indeed, Henry IV, emperor of Germany,

in spite of the wrathful protests of the Christian clergy, allowed forcibly converted Jews to return publicly to Judaism. Now, however, those Jews who had had the courage to defy death and to remain faithful to their religion refused to accept the apostates as their brethren, unwilling converts though they had been, and vehemently opposed their re-admission into the synagogue. It was Rashi, with his characteristic mildness and tolerance, who showed them the error of their harshness. "Far be it from us", he said, "to turn away these wanderers who have returned to us. They became Christians only through fear of death; they show their true feeling by hastening to return to their faith."

Only a few years later, in 1105, Rashi died, but his influence did not die with him. The men of his own family carried on his work. His sons-in-law, Judah ben Nathan and Meir ben Samuel, popularly known as Ram, were well-known scholars. And Rashi's grandsons, the sons of Meir ben Samuel, continued the family tradition. They were Samuel ben Meir, known as Rashbam; Isaac ben Meir, known as Ribam, and Jacob ben Meir Tam, known as Rabbenu Tam. Their task was to derive from the Talmud laws made necessary by the ever-changing conditions of life. And it was above all Rabbenu Tam who held that all new enactments must represent a continuous development of the Talmud. In almost all of the editions of the Talmud, on the outer margin, and opposite the notes of Rashi, the critical and explanatory notes of these men are to be found. The notes are known as Tosafot, and the authors as Tosafists. The term Tosafot means "additions", and some scholars think these notes are so called because they are additions to Rashi's commentary on the Talmud. Others see in them rather additions to the Talmud itself, extensions and developments of the Talmud. The term was not really applied first to the notes of Rashi's

Rashi's Family.

disciples, but to the additions to Judah ha-Nasi's Mishnah, Tosefta being the Babylonian term, which, in Palestinian writings is replaced by Tosafot.

The most important of the Tosafists is Rabbenu Tam. He was born in 1100 and died in 1171. He was the actual head of the Tosafists in France, and it was he who indicated the method which was adopted by all his successors. If the Tosafists are to be considered as continuing the work of the Amoraim, it was chiefly Rabbenu Tam who gave the impulse in that direction. In another respect, too, he furnishes a model for later Tosafists, and that is in his independence of standard authorities, even of his grandfather, Rashi. He protested against the way in which commentators altered the established reading of ancient texts, often violently distorting them from their original meaning. He himself would recognize only well-authenticated readings, which he painstakingly collected and examined. Thus a large number of his Tosafot are devoted to a correction of readings of the text. His great caution about textual matters had a most commendable influence, for his pupils took to heart his warnings against changing the text. He emphatically declared, moreover, that his explanations always followed the simple meaning of the text, and he argued against those who distorted the explanations of earlier teachers. Yet in this he was not entirely consistent, for he often read into the text distinctions which did not actually exist in it.

Rabbenu Tam.

In some ways Rabbenu Tam was like his brethren in Spain. He added to the French absorption in the study of the Talmud a knowledge of grammar in which he towered above his French contemporaries. And he was a poet in the style which the Spanish Jews had introduced into Hebrew poetry. When Abraham ibn Ezra was traveling through France, Rabbenu Tam greeted him in verse, a feat which led the Spaniard to exclaim in astonishment, "Who

has admitted the French into the temple of poetry?" But it was as a Talmudist that he won his greatest fame. Even during his lifetime he was recognized as the greatest Talmudical authority in France and Germany, and questions came to him in large numbers from these countries, and occasionally also from Spain. The respect paid him was unbounded. People hardly had the temerity to differ with him in opinion. Where he expressed an opinion at variance with Rashi's they scarcely dared decide between grandfather and grandson, "those two high mountains."

Both exercised an unusually deep and widespread influence on the development of the Law in the life of the Jews of Europe down to the present day. The Tosafists of France carried on the work of Rabbenu Tam.

The Influence of Rashi.

And Rashi's long life of study had left the Jews works that were to be their comfort and their guidance through all the weary years that were before them. When schools were destroyed, when teachers and scholars were massacred, when repeated expulsions drove the Jews from France, the fine flower of French Judaism was not entirely lost: the Jews of France carried with them to foreign lands their ideals and their books; they carried with them Rashi's teachings. Pillage, exile, martyrdom,—all could be borne so long as they could go for strength to Bible and Talmud, those fountains of inspiration. And to these springs of living water Rashi had made the way plain.

The Value of his Work To-day.

Rashi's reputation has not diminished in the course of eight centuries. After the lapse of eight hundred years Rashi the scholar is still the necessary instructor of modern commentators on Bible and Talmud, and Rashi the rabbi and the man is still a popular hero in Jewish homes.

Suggestions for Further Reading.

Graetz: *Geschichte,* Vol. VI, p. 64 ff.

Graetz: *History of the Jews,* Vol. III, pp. 286-9.

Jewish Encyclopedia: Vol. X, p. 324, Article *Rashi.*

Liber, M.: *Rashi.*

Rosenau, W.: *Jewish Biblical Commentators,* pp. 63-79.

Winter u. Wuensche: *Juedische Litteratur,* Vol. II, p. 276 ff.

XVI.

MEIR OF ROTHENBURG.

A Retrospect.

We have now traveled far in the centuries. We have seen post-Biblical Judaism pass through many stages: we have seen it grow from its humble beginnings in the Vineyard in Jamnia to its splendor of achievement in Babylon and in Spain. We have seen it spread to all the countries of Europe. We have found Israelites everywhere learning the truths of Judaism—from Ibn Ezra, for example, on his travels, in Italy in the south and in England far to the north. In Germany and in France we have found Jews listening reverently to the wise words of Rashi.

But then we saw Rashi's peaceful work in vineyard and in school sadly broken by the horrors of the first Crusade. For with the first Crusade, in 1096, began an era of well-nigh intolerable persecution for the Jew. And yet, up to these days of darkness, the Jews had enjoyed the good-will of their neighbors and the protection of princes and kings. Side by side with Christian comrades they had worked in vineyard and in olive grove, in the workshop and at the loom. Christian servants had labored cheerfully for Jewish masters. Jews and Christians had exchanged friendly visits. Jewish merchants had brought to western ports the strange spices and the rare fruits, the quaint folk-lore, the glamour and the romance of the far East. Jewish doctors healed Christian patients, and their learned works were on the shelves of university libraries. In university class-rooms, Jewish sages taught with Christian schoolmen.

Now all this was to be changed. Largely through the Crusades, the good understanding between Jews and Christians was to be destroyed. The Crusaders were setting off for distant Palestine to fight "unbelievers", and here were the Jews, "unbelievers" dwelling in their midst. "If we are to slay infidels, why not slay them at home as well as in Syria?" This was their logic. Killing peaceful Jewish citizens, therefore, was no murder; plundering their treasures to use in the holy cause was no robbery. The spirit in which even the leaders of the Crusades carried out their mission may be judged from the fact that when at last, under Godfrey of Bouillon, they entered Jerusalem, they drove all the Jews of the Holy City into a synagogue and burned them with their place of worship. And yet it was not so much the leaders as the followers that burned and robbed and killed. Now and then a brave voice was raised against the slaughter. The Bishop of Speyer and the Bishop of Cologne both protected the Jews with kindness and energy. Later the noble monk, St. Bernard of France, at the risk of his own life, did all he could to check the terrible cruelty. Enlightened kings, too, protested. The German emperor, Henry IV, who had been away in Italy, was full of indignation at the dark deeds that had been done during his absence. In spite of the anger of the clergy, he went so far as to allow those Jews who had been forcibly converted to Christianity to return to their own faith. But such humanity was rare—so rare, indeed, that we find the good Bishop of Cologne accused by Church historians of having been bribed by Jewish gold. Not otherwise could they understand the exceptional sight of a Christian prelate showing kindness to a Jew. And any opposition to the prevailing cruelty was useless. In all the flourishing towns that Jewish industry had helped to make prosperous, Jewish men and women, and even little children, were slain by the sword, or burned, or drowned.

The Effect of the Crusades.

And yet, as we have seen, there was no natural, deep-seated hatred of the Jews in the hearts of the people among whom they dwelt. Jew-hatred had to be stirred up, now by the State and now by the Church. It was a maxim of the statecraft of the time to have people alike—of the same mind, the same religion. Rulers feared differences. And as for the Church, it is a tragic element of much of the most terrible persecution that it sprang from a perverted, distorted sense of duty. Religious fanatics tortured in order that they might convert, sacrificing the body, only, as they honestly believed, that they might save the soul from eternal pain; for they saw no salvation outside the Church. Not only Jews, but Christian heretics as well, were hunted down mercilessly. Dissent had to be crushed, whether it was political or religious, and to crush it, the leaders of Church and State poisoned the minds of the people against the Jews. As a result of their efforts, the masses, who had no cause to hate the Jews, and who, during the first Crusade, even tried to protect the Jews from the Knights of the Cross, came gradually to believe that the Jews were indeed the enemies alike of God and man.

The Motive for Persecution.

To create this prejudice, horrible charges were brought against the Jews. The worst of these was the accusation of ritual murder. Just as the Romans, long before, had spread the rumor that the early Christians killed children, whose blood they offered to their God, so now the Christians accused the Jews of killing Christian children at Passover time to use their blood in the preparation of the unleavened bread. In vain enlightened kings, and even popes, pointed out that the Jewish law clearly forbids all use of blood; in vain they commanded that no one should raise the groundless charge against the Jews: the ridiculous myth continued to be dinned into the ears of the masses until it became part of their popular belief. Even to-day this dreadful legend still exists. In benighted countries

The Ritual Murder Charge.

it is still able to rouse the credulous people to frantic outbursts against the Jews. In those dark days when it first arose, it spread plunder and massacre of the Jews through France and Germany, and even England.

Another charge by which the priests inflamed the minds of the people against the Jews was that, in malicious mockery, the Jews stole the Host, the consecrated bread or wafer used in Church ceremony, and desecrated it by pounding it in a mortar until blood flowed from it, or by piercing it with knives. A modern botanist has shown that the "blood" on the Host came about through a fungus, the so-called blood-fungus, which appeared upon the host when it was damp. Yet whole communities of Jews were sacrificed to the credulity of the mobs that believed this accusation.

The Desecration of the Host Accusation.

All these sorrows, however, were only a prelude to the massacres that raged from 1348 to 1350. In 1348, a dreadful plague, the Black Death, came out of Asia and swept across Europe. It demanded its victims of rich and poor, Jews and Christians. In three years about twenty-five million lives were snatched away by it. Soon after its appearance, there came from France the mad story that the Jews had caused it by poisoning the wells! It is barely possible that the Jews, protected in a measure by their isolation and by their obedience to the hygienic precepts of their Law, suffered somewhat less than their Christian neighbors. Wild as the rumor was, it was believed. Everywhere the frenzied people threw themselves upon the unfortunate Jews. Scarcely one Jewish community in Europe remained unmolested. In many cities Jews were burned to death; in many others, they killed themselves in their synagogues in order not to fall living into the hands of their tormentors. In Strassburg, all Jews who would not kiss the crucifix, nine hundred in number, were burned on one great pyre. Only children were spared, and

The Charge of Poisoning the Wells.

they were baptized before the eyes of their agonized parents. Against these fiendish cruelties some princes and bishops again lifted their voices. They pointed out that the Jews themselves died of the plague, and that it raged, too, where there were no Jews. They were unheeded. Even the exhortations of the pope were without avail. The massacres ceased only from lack of further victims.

Thus zealous bigotry working on superstition and ignorance contrived to make the life of the Jew almost intolerable. The time came when the average man believed, "if sickness prevailed, it was because the Jews had poisoned the wells; if a Christian child were lost, it had been killed for some Jewish ceremony; if a church sacristan was careless, it was the Jews who had stolen the Host from the altar to pierce it with knives."

Century followed century, but brought no relief to the Jews. Every country has its shameful tale of persecution. Not a single Christian people has kept itself clear of the reproach of inhumanity to the Jews.

In England.

In England, where Jews had lived since the Roman Conquest, the infamous blood accusation was often heard, and in all cases the Jews paid for the baseless charge with their lives. Chaucer in one of his "Canterbury Tales" tells the story of one of the boys whose untimely death was laid at the door of the Jews, and his version of the legend of little Hugh of Lincoln shows the hatred with which the "cursed Jews" had come to be regarded in mediaeval England. The most serious outbreaks against the Jews in England were occasioned by the accession of Richard the Lionhearted in 1189. The Jews, anxious to gain the favor of the new monarch, sent a delegation of the most respected members of the community to his coronation at Westminster, bearing as costly gifts as they could afford. The bigoted Archbishop of Canterbury, however, protested against their admission, and Richard, not dreaming that any

ill consequences would follow, obeyed the churchman and forbade the entrance of the Jews. Thereupon the report spread in London that the king desired the humiliation and destruction of the Jews. Immediately the mob fell upon them. In London not a Jewish household escaped robbery or murder. Similar attacks occurred throughout the entire kingdom. The most tragic took place at York, where the Jews sought refuge in the castle. The townspeople, urged on by the monks, who promised salvation to whoever should shed the blood of an unbeliever, closed in on the stronghold. The Jews realized that further resistance was hopeless. In the night a blaze burst forth from the castle, and in the morning the besiegers found an ash-heap which entombed five hundred skeletons. To escape the tortures of the Christians, fathers had slain their wives and children, and had then fallen by the hands of one another.

Expulsion from England.

For a century longer the Jews managed to maintain a precarious foothold in England. Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe" gives some idea of the superstitious fear and savage hatred with which they were regarded. At last Edward I, in 1290, issued a decree banishing all Jews and confiscating their property. Any Jew found on English soil was to be hanged. 16,500 Jews preferred the bitterness of exile to the dishonor of pretended conversion, and quitted the inhospitable shore of England to face new dangers in strange lands. One ship captain, who had been paid to convey several families and their goods down the Thames to the sea, ran his vessel upon a sandbank and made the poor people who had entrusted themselves to him disembark. Then, as the tide rose and swept across the sand, he sailed away, calling out derisively to his drowning victims, "Cry unto Moses, who led your ancestors safely through the Red Sea to bring you to dry land." The unhappy people perished in the waves. This affair came to the ears of the authorities, and the offenders

were hanged as murderers. But how many similar offenses must have been perpetrated against the helpless exiles, and have remained unpunished and unrecorded! England was now free of Jews, and for nearly four centuries not a Jew lived on English soil.

The English exiles had little choice of asylum. In France, expelling the Jews and then selling them permission to re-

In France.

turn was found an excellent means of raising money when the royal treasury was empty. To France, too, belongs the sorry distinction of tearing from the persecuted Jews their holy books and burning them as works of blasphemy, thus robbing the oppressed people of their consolation and spiritual safeguard in all these stormy times. Then, in 1394, came the final expulsion.

From Germany the Jews were never exiled in a body, but they lived for the most part a miserable, hounded existence.

In Germany.

There is not a state or a city in Germany which has not, at some time or other, had its evil share in ill-treating the Jews. Basle expelled its Jews, Fribourg burned them, Speyer drowned them. The entire Jewish population of Strassburg, two thousand souls, was dragged upon an immense scaffold, which was set on fire. At Worms, Frankfort, and Mainz, the Jews set their homes on fire and threw themselves into the flames, to escape a worse fate. In one old town in Germany visitors to the synagogue are shown a lamp burning with a double flame before the ark. The guide will tell that once, in the old cruel days, in order to excite hatred against the Jews of the city, a dead child was secretly thrown into the cellar of a Jew. Straightway the contrivers of the outrage brought an accusation against the Jews, the child was found, and the authorities of the city threatened to throw the chief men of the congregation into a caldron of boiling oil if the "murderers" were not given up. Time pressed; the rabbi and the elders were bound, ready for their death by torture. Then appeared two

strangers of noble bearing, who gave themselves into the hands of the magistrates, voluntarily accusing themselves of the crime. Innocent, with a pious lie on their lips, they sacrificed themselves to save others. It is to commemorate their heroic death that the lamp with the double flame is kept burning forever in the old synagogue.

A Refuge in Poland.

During all these unhappy years, the harassed Jews of Germany, driven in all directions by the violence of their persecutors, came to Poland in large numbers. They held to their German tongue and transmitted it, mixed with Hebrew and Polish elements, from father to son. There was no calling that they did not follow. They were farmers, artisans, merchants. And for a long time they lived in Poland in peace, following their callings honorably and helpfully, and studying the Talmud so diligently that they came to be of great importance in the development of Jewish life.

Meanwhile, in the rest of Christian Europe, Church and State were ever finding more ingenious methods of persecution than mere brutal pillage and slaughter. The martyr's death, horrible as it was made, was one glorious moment of sacrifice. Not only the death, but the whole life of the Jew was to become a martyrdom, from the cradle to the grave. Those who were not slain were "reserved for greater ignominy, for an existence more bitter than death."

Restrictive Laws.

In addition to crushing the Jews down under the weight of enormous taxes, the State crippled them by rigidly restricting them in their choice of an occupation. The guilds, those great semi-religious unions of workmen of the middle ages, accepted no Jews; and therefore it was seldom possible for a Jew to follow any handicraft. This was a very bitter privation, for the old Jewish esteem of handicrafts persisted in the middle ages. Agriculture, too, the Jews honored most highly, and now, in almost all countries, Jews were forbidden to own or cul-

tivate farms; so agriculture became impossible for them. There was left for them only trade, and traders they were forced to become. Yet the Jews had originally shown no special aptitude for trade. They had been herdsmen and tillers of the soil. Their traffic had been insignificant. Now, however, when prejudice forbade agriculture and the handicrafts, commerce became their only resource. And as they practised it, their dexterity naturally increased. The fact that they were scattered all over the earth made communication between far distant lands easy for them, and stimulated trade among them until they became merchants everywhere. That they did thus become merchants has, very unjustly, been made a reproach to them. As we have seen, they turned to trade, not to gratify any natural instinct or aptitude, but because rigorous laws forced them into it. And then, too, their trading was as useful to humanity as any other necessary occupation, as agriculture itself. Jewish merchants were the connecting links between Asia and Europe. As to the honesty with which they traded, impartial investigators have found the Jews rather above than below the level of general morality. The Jews held to a faith that required of them, in this as in every other activity of life, an ideal purity.

Peddler and Money-lender.

The more, however, the Christians themselves came to turn to commerce, the more the Jews were hampered even in this activity. When the great Italian republics began to turn their attention to trading, restrictions upon Jewish trade were as common as restrictions upon Jewish agriculture and Jewish handicrafts. In the later middle ages, the Jewish trader found himself taxed when he entered a market and taxed when he left it. He was permitted to enter the market-place at all only at inconvenient hours. Finally he was left nothing to trade in but second-hand goods and money. He became the peddler and the money-lender of Europe.

Now as money-lenders the Jews found themselves in a peculiar and dangerous position. The Catholic Church, following indeed a precept of the Jews' own Mosaic code, regarded the practise of lending money for interest as most blameworthy. The Church drew no distinction between loans to the needy and advances to capitalists. Interest was regarded as robbery, whether the lender demanded five or fifty percent. Under these conditions, the life of the money-lender was certain to be one of grave risks. He had no rights at law; he and his property were always at the mercy of the envy and rage of the populace; a needy king considered himself justified in excusing all creditors their debts to Jews on payment of a certain sum to himself, thus reducing thousands of Jews to beggary. On account of this lack of ordinary safety, on account, too, of the scarcity of gold, and, most of all, on account of the excessive and constant demands of Church and State, bishop and king, for taxes and more taxes, the Jew was forced to charge interest that to-day would rightly be regarded as exorbitant. Thus he was stamped for all ages with the shameful brand of the usurer, the Shylock. But it was the kings and the princes and the heads of the Church who were the real usurers, and not the helpless Jew. He was only the unwilling means through whom the aristocracy oppressed the lower classes, gaining through him the gold that they demanded, while the blame attached itself to him. Like all tax-gatherers, he came to be so hated that any fine day, without any pretext, the mob might fall upon his house and rob him of what wealth his industry and frugality had acquired. Then they would kill him, or, if he were more fortunate, they would merely hunt him from house and home. Such possessions as escaped the rabble would thereupon fall into the hands of the lord protector. Yet although the middle ages confused banker and usurer, regarding both with equal contempt, among the Jewish mediaeval dealers in money were many high-minded

and cultured men, deeply interested in literature, giving with princely liberality to charity. And records show that Jews were often incomparably more lenient creditors than were Christian financiers, and that their rates were sometimes considerably lower than those charged by Christians.

The Nobility of Character of the Mediaeval Jew: His Honesty.

In spite of the doubtful callings into which the mediaeval Jew was thrust, he kept himself upright and blameless in his business dealings. "A Jew sins more against God by cheating and robbing a Christian than when he cheats or robs a Jew", was a frequent maxim in mediaeval books of morals; "because, although both acts are dishonest and criminal, in the case of a Christian the Jew not only offends against the moral law, but profanes the sacred name of God." When the Jew did offend, as he did, for example, in clipping or counterfeiting the coin of the realm, he was the exception among his brethren and not the rule; and the synagogue held over his head the dire threat of excommunication, of casting him out from the fellowship of Israelites. Nor was the Jew the only offender in this. Debased coinage was everywhere common, and we read of many a Christian financier, high in position and power, being brought to justice for the same offence. So little, indeed, had the mediaeval Jew the reputation for dishonesty among his neighbors that we find him constantly employed in financial offices with which he would not have been entrusted had he not been trustworthy.

His Charity.

In spite of grinding taxes that emptied his purse as often as he had laboriously filled it, the mediaeval Jew was most charitable. His benevolence was wide and generous: although it went out first to his own brethren, it knew no bounds of creed or race. He housed and fed poor travelers, often refugees from persecution; he ransomed captives; he pensioned widows; he enabled the poor to become self-supporting and self-respecting. All this

he did with consideration and tact, in the manner of one who offered a friendly interchange of services.

His Love of Learning.

At a time when his Christian neighbors were growing up in the densest intellectual darkness, the Jew held ignorance a disgrace. His highest ambition was to be learned. The religion for which he was making such costly sacrifices was so infinitely precious to him that he felt he must reverently learn every smallest injunction of the rabbis, must devote every free hour to religious study. Even the poorest, no matter how toilsome the labor by which he won his daily bread, at least in the night hours bent his head over the pages of the Talmud. Thus it happened that at a time when even princes could hardly write their names, every Jew was an educated man. He was a careful scholar, a keen thinker, his mind developed by constant study of the Talmud.

His Sabbath Peace.

And in one spot could the Jew of the middle ages throw off the thought of the oppression that bowed him down. In his own home he found the respect and the love denied him outside the ghetto walls. For six laborious days he might bear his peddler's pack from village to village, but on the seventh day, in the circle of family love, he straightened up to the full stature of a man. In the glow of the Sabbath lights, he laid his hand in blessing on the head of his children, praying for joy and peace for them; he praised his happiness in having a God-fearing wife at his side. In that atmosphere he felt himself a priest, and his home a shrine. The Friday evening meal was a service, at the end of which he sang songs celebrating the Sabbath peace and the family happiness. Heinrich Heine, in the fanciful verse of "Princess Sabbath" has given us a vivid picture of him:[1]

[1]Translation by Margaret Armour.

"In Arabia's book of fable
We behold enchanted princes
Who at times their form recover,
Fair as first they were created.

"Yet the respite from enchantment
Is but brief, and, without warning,
Lo! we see his Royal Highness
Shuffled back into a monster.

"Of a prince by fate thus treated
Is my song. His name is Israel,
And a witch's spell has changed him
To the likeness of a dog.

"As a dog, with dog's ideas,
All the week, a cur, he noses
Through life's filthy mire and sweepings,
Butt of mocking city Arabs;

"But on every Friday evening,
On a sudden, in the twilight,
The enchantment weakens, ceases,
And the dog once more is human.

"And his father's halls he enters
As a man, with man's emotions,
Head and heart alike uplifted,
Clad in pure and festal raiment."

Above all, he was faithful to the religion for which he must suffer. The more he was persecuted, the more heroically he clung to the faith of his fathers. The most gruesome tortures could make only an insignificant few give up their Judaism. Some, indeed, yielded to the temptation of baptism, and through it found a way back to comfort and safety, to worldly honor and power. But the vast majority preferred persecution, exile, death itself to pretended conversion; and thousands went with splendid devotion to martyrs' deaths, like Akiba of old, with the Shema on their lips.

His Heroism.

It was the religion to which they gave their lives that gave them their exalted courage on the rack and at the stake, their unequalled patient endurance of the insult and humiliation of their daily lives. The services in the synagogue, among fellow worshippers and fellow sufferers, gave them comfort and strength. In company with those who shared their sorrow, the oppressed people gained renewed hope from prayer. In many a gloomy hour they were inspired with new zeal by the writings of the prophets who saw in Israel's days of darkness only the prelude to the time of peace and brotherhood for all nations. The poets of the synagogue, too, bade them look to Zion, and wait patiently for the day when the Law would once more go forth from the holy hill.

The Rabbis of the Middle Ages.

And what shall be said of those heroic men whose task it was to guide the people through the darkness and terror of these ages of persecution? Out of the perils that encompassed them shine the steadfastness and the courage of the rabbis who taught in the shadow of the prison walls, and preached before the Ark of God while the rabble were battering down the doors of the synagogue.

Among the greatest of them was Rabbi Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg. He was born in Worms, about 1215, of a family noted for its scholars. From his letters we gather that no fewer than twelve Talmudical authorities of the time were related to him, and the epitaph upon his father's grave praises him as a man of extraordinary piety and distinguished scholarship, a preacher with a brilliant gift of oratory. It is very probable that Meir received his earliest instruction from this learned father. Later he studied in French schools as well as in German, and on his return to his native land a devoted circle of pupils quickly gathered about him. Evidently his fame was so great that many communities vied with one another for the privilege of securing his services, for we learn that he offi-

Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg.

ciated as rabbi in many places,—in Kostnitz, Augsburg, Würzburg, Rothenburg, Worms, Nuremberg, and Mayence. As Rothenburg is the locality usually associated with his name, it is probably there that he spent the years of his greatest activity and usefulness. In spite of the constant menace of the times, the life he led there had its pleasant hours. He himself tells us of his comfortable house, with its airy dining-hall and with a separate room for each of his many pupils. It is not difficult to picture the honored rabbi in his spacious home, among his books, his pupils about him.

Chief of the Rabbis.

To him from all parts of the world, in spite of the difficulty of communication and the dangers of travel, the Jews sent all the questions that perplexed them. All the queries as to right and wrong, the problems of ethics and morality, the inquiries concerning the interpretation of the Sacred Word came to the rabbi of Rothenburg. For although it is difficult to determine his actual official position among the rabbis of his time, although he may not have been chief rabbi of Germany, elected by the Jewish communities to that office, still it is certain that he was everywhere recognized as the spiritual leader, whose decrees were considered binding. And so, according to Rabbi Meir's decisions, the Jews ordered their conduct.

Questions of Taxation.

The subjects on which he passed judgment touched every phase of contemporary life,—liturgy and ritual, rights of property, civil and criminal law, domestic troubles, rules of commerce and finance. Many questions, for example, arose from the peculiar position of the Jews as aliens without rights at law, homeless outcasts, serfs of the emperor, subject to such taxes as he required them to pay. And most emperors looked upon the Jews as a source of taxes, to be protected only when their destruction threatened emptiness in the royal treasure boxes. Indeed, if a king were in special need of money, and this happened frequently in those times of many wars,

he sold his Jews like a herd of cattle to some more wealthy prince. Now it was the custom of the Jewish community to pay these onerous taxes from a general fund, to which all members of the synagogue had to contribute their share. Selfish men, however, sometimes gained the favor of the authorities, and wished to make a private arrangement with the government, to their own personal advantage and the disadvantage of the community. This Rabbi Meir would not permit. He decided that each must pay his proportionate share of the amount levied on the community in which he lived.

Another class of cases of common occurrence arose from the necessity of redeeming from captivity those Jews who were cast into prison for the purpose of extorting money from them. So frequent were these imprisonments and so exorbitant were the sums demanded, that some preferred the dungeon to freedom at that price. Yet Rabbi Meir decided that the dignity and common good of the community demanded that the work of redemption should not cease, and that the ransomed was in every case under the obligation of repaying the community.

Questions of Ransom.

Even Rabbi Meir himself was to taste the bitterness of life in prison. As his long and useful life drew towards its close, the condition of the Jews in Germany became well-nigh intolerable. Not for a moment were they sure of their comfort or their lives. Extortion, pillage, arson, murder were matters of everyday occurrence. In all the towns along the Rhine there were massacres, and in all the villages of Germany the Jews lived in dread. Many fled. Hundreds went to the Holy Land, for at that time conditions in Palestine were very favorable to the Jews. At length the venerable rabbi of Rothenburg decided to leave the country of his birth, the scene of his long labors. The exact occasion of his departure is not quite clear. Some assume that Rabbi Meir was leading a

A Fugitive from Germany.

band of those fugitives who were driven from home by the cruelty of the Germans. Others assert that the emperor demanded so exorbitant a sum of money from the Jews that they could not possibly pay it, and that their aged leader, fearing that he would be seized as hostage, decided upon flight.

That such a fear was not ungrounded, the sequel proves. The rabbi succeeded in reaching a city in the mountains of Lombardy. There he was seen and recognized by a renegade Jew in the train of the Bishop of Basel, who was passing through the city on his way home from Rome. This traitor informed the bishop, who brought it about that the lord of the city seized Meir and delivered him to Emperor Rudolph. Now it was by no means the intention of the emperor that the Jews should escape from his clutches and that the imperial treasury should lack the gold he could wring from his unhappy serfs. Accordingly he cast the rabbi into prison, first in Wasserburg, a German locality that can not now be identified, and later in the fortress of Ensisheim, in the district of Colmar, upper Alsace. For the ransom of his distinguished captive, the emperor demanded the enormous sum of 30,000 marks, the equivalent in modern currency of probably $250,000. The Jews, impoverished though they were, were eager to attempt to make the sacrifice. But Rabbi Meir refused. He declared that if any such huge sum were paid for the liberation of a teacher in Israel, the government would greedily repeat the experiment again and again. So the aged rabbi became a voluntary prisoner. In the beginning he was sustained by the hope that the emperor would relent, and that he would be speedily released. Then all hope of freedom on earth faded, and he submitted in the thought that it was the will of God, whose ways are ever just. After seven years, in 1293, death came as a welcome release. But with death the tragedy did not end. The authorities would sur-

A Heroic Prisoner.

render the body for burial only on the payment of a most onerous ransom. For fourteen years the utmost efforts of the Jews were fruitless. At last a devoted admirer of the rabbi succeeded in satisfying the demands of the rulers, and Rabbi Meir was laid to rest with his fathers in the graveyard in Worms.

His Works.

Rabbi Meir left voluminous works, the product of his busy life of varied activity and of his years of enforced leisure in prison. Indeed, to him the greatest privation of his prison cell was his lack of the books which he needed for his study and his writing. He was a great Tosafist, and his Tosafot to several Talmudical treatises are important and extensive. They show him as a clear and logical thinker, with a fine insight into methods and system. He was interested in many subjects; he wrote on the blessings to be pronounced in performing certain actions, on the ritual slaughtering and subsequent examination of animals, on mourning customs, on the duties of husband and wife, on ritual ceremonies in the synagogue, and on various other matters.

His Chief Characteristics.

In everything he is the representative of the point of view of the Talmudist; for him the Talmud is the rule of life. He is the scholar, thoroughly familiar with the works of his predecessors, and yet the independent thinker often combating with vigor the opinions of earlier authorities. He shows marked independence, too, in his freedom from the superstitions which were prevalent in the Germany of his time, among Jews as among Gentiles. And a most characteristic trait is his sanity, his common sense, which we find, for example, in his emphatic disapproval of indiscriminate emigration to Palestine. Only those should go there, he says, who can support themselves there and lead a holy life in the Holy Land. In moral and ethical questions his attitude is finely upright. To the question whether a lawyer may bring into court arguments which

he knows are false, his answer is: "No Jew may commit so ignominious a sin against justice and truth." His judgments in regard to differences between husband and wife show that he zealously defended the rights and the dignity of woman. In an age when the minds of men were turning more and more to the mystical, it was his service to lead them towards a rational and thorough study of the Talmud. Out of the diversity of varied practice he tried to restore unity on the basis of his independent study of the Talmud.

His Poems.

The writer of Tosafot and Responsa was a poet, too, and many of his poems are included in the prayerbooks of the German Jews. For his form he went to the poems of Judah Halevi, and although he is in no respect to be classed with the great Spanish singer, he did not lack warmth of imagination and depth of feeling. His best-known poem is a dirge on the public burning of Hebrew books in Paris in 1244, when twenty-four wagon-loads were fed to the flames and when a French rabbi wrote to Meir, "I have no book for study. The persecutor has taken from us our treasures." The German rabbi lamented:

"Ask, is it well, O thou consumed of fire,
With those that mourn for thee,
That yearn to tread thy courts, that sore desire
Thy sanctuary,

"That, panting for thy land's sweet dust, sore grieved,
And sorrow in their souls,
And by the flames of wasting fire bereaved,
Mourn for thy scrolls,

"That grope in shadow of unbroken night,
Waiting the day to see
Which o'er them yet shall cast a radiance bright,
And over thee?"

The great authority of Rabbi Meir did not cease with his death. Men called him "Light of the Exile", conferring

upon him a title given else to none but Rashi and Rabbenu Gershom. Upon the development of the religious life of the Jews of Germany he had a most powerful influence. Nor was his authority limited to the confines of his country: during his lifetime and for many generations afterward his opinion was sought also by Spanish Talmudists. His greatest influence was exerted through his pupils; in their works the teachings of the master were perpetuated.

His Influence.

Suggestions for Further Reading.

Back, S. R.: *Meir b. Baruch.*

Graetz: *Geschichte,* Vol. VII, p. 156 ff.

Graetz: *History of the Jews,* Vol. III, pp. 625, 640 ff.

Jewish Encyclopedia: Vol. VIII, p. 437, Article *Meir of Rothenburg.*

Marshall, L.: *Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg,* in The Menorah, Vol. XL, No. 4, pp. 183-192.

XVII.

JOSEPH ALBO.

During all these dark and dreadful years of persecution, there was just one country in Europe of which the Jews could think with happy self-respect. The German Jew might have to endure his dingy ghetto, but he took comfort when he thought of his Spanish brothers at home in palaces almost regal in splendor. The German Jew, marked for scorn with a degrading badge, might have to slink and cower in the shadows, but he took heart when he remembered that in Spain the Jew, clothed in the silks and satins of court costume, stood, sword at side and head erect, in the presence of the king. And the peddler under his heavy pack straightened his bent shoulders when he let his mind dwell with pride on the Jews in Spain,—physicians, financiers, statesmen,—high in the favor of rulers, directing the destinies of nations. For the centuries of Moorish rule in Spain had been, as you remember, a brilliant period for the Jew. The Mohammedan Caliphs had been too broad in their culture to let a difference in creed rob the Jew of his share in the life of the country. And this tolerance the early Christian kings had been glad to continue. The Jews were their valued counselors and advisers. At nightfall they retreated to no ghetto; in the full light of day no distinction of dress marked them off from other courtiers in attendance upon the king. Refined and dignified in their speech and bearing, they were

The Golden Age in Spain.

not to be distinguished from the other Spaniards among whom they stood.

But the Jews were not forever to enjoy this security and wealth, this honor and power. The authorities of the Church began to look with distrust and alarm at this amazing phenomenon of Jews not hounded, Jews left unmolested in high places. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, fanatical priests went about the country, preaching impassioned sermons to the people, lashing them into a fury against the Jews. They cried out against the stubborn unbelief of the Jews and urged all true believers to hunt down the infidels. Now the Jews had many friends in Spain, many well-wishers who had no desire to see them come to harm,—many, indeed, who had the will and the courage to stand by them and defend them in their hour of need. But they had also many dangerous enemies. During their centuries of peace and prosperity, the Spanish Jews had forgotten the face of danger. They had become a little arrogant in their power, a little ostentatious in their wealth. Human failings, these, and no great crimes; yet they stirred up malicious envy and greedy hatred. Many eyes had looked with covetousness on the rich attire of the Jews, their magnificent palaces, their influence with rulers. And now all this avarice and all the bigotry inflamed by the priests burst savagely upon the Jews of Spain. Over the lovely land swept fire and massacre.

Persecution.

Upon the Spanish Jews these storms broke almost without warning. There had always, it is true, been faint mutterings of distrust, whispers of dislike, but these had been clouds so faint that they had cast scarcely a shadow upon the bright sunshine. Now came this bolt from a clear sky. The Jews had felt so secure in Spain that they were unprepared for danger. They shrank in horror from the perils that their humbler French and German brothers faced unflinchingly. Even more terrible, perhaps, than the quick

agony of martyrdom to these proud and sensitive Spaniards were the cruel edicts, new to them. They would be stripped of their robes of honor and marked for scorn with a humiliating badge. They would be driven from their palaces and herded in the hovels of the Jewries. They would be robbed of their practice of medicine and the transaction of all dignified business, so that, knowing no other means of gaining a livelihood, they would fall into want and hear their children cry for bread.

The Temptation of Pretended Conversion.

But there was one way to escape this sudden and unforeseen peril. There was a way for the Spanish Jews to save their castles and their comfort, their lives and the lives of those dear to them. They had only to renounce their faith and become Christians! It was a terrible temptation. And so, although the streets of Barcelona and Cordova and Toledo ran red with the blood of those who steadfastly refused to abandon their religion, many forsook the faith of their fathers and allowed themselves to be baptized.

Maranos.

Imagine, if you can, the feelings with which these sons and daughters of Israel went into the Christian fold! Imagine the respect with which these New Christians, as they were called, regarded a religion that converted them with the sword and the firebrand! Dazed, broken-hearted, they loved the faith of their fathers as ardently as when they had been able to practise it openly and unafraid. Abandon it entirely they could not. Crushed in spirit though they were, they still found means to cling secretly to the religion that they were compelled to renounce in public. In secret rooms of their homes, hidden from spying eyes, they kept their Sabbaths and their festivals; they read their Bible and taught their children to cherish in their hearts the belief that they must deny with their lips. And this irksome, disgraceful disguise they were quick to throw off when opportunity came. Some escaped to neigh-

boring Moorish countries. There where the people were more tolerant than the Christians of Spain, they returned to Judaism with increased zeal, to make atonement for their enforced backsliding. The greater number, however, were unable to leave the beautiful country which they loved, even now, with a passionate devotion. These unwilling converts the people of the land called Maranos, which means "the Damned;" and they remained suspected and distrusted by the Christians and grieved over by braver Jews.

The sword and the firebrand were not the only instruments of conversion. Friars, crucifix in hand, preached in the synagogues to unwilling but helpless congregations. Public disputations were arranged by the Church between Christian clergy and Jewish rabbis. A few of the Maranos, in their uneasy ambition to stand well with the followers of the religion which they professed, lent themselves to this zeal of the Church for making converts, and used their knowledge of the literature of their former co-religionists as a controversial weapon against them.

Public Disputations.

Towards the end of 1412 the most learned rabbis and students of Scripture in the Kingdom of Aragon were summoned by the king to a religious disputation at Tortosa. A newly baptized Jewish physician, like the Pablo Christiani who had faced Nachmanides two centuries earlier, was to prove to these leaders of their people, out of the Talmud itself, that Jesus was the Messiah. Once the leaders had been convinced and converted, the rank and file would follow of their own accord. Physicians, writers, poets, men of position and distinction, of piety and learning, were chosen. They went in fear of the worst. The violence of continued persecution had robbed them of the fearlessness with which Nachmanides had stood forth as the champion of Judaism against its adversaries. Yet for over a year and nine months the wearisome debate stretched,

At Tortosa.

and the Jews, exhausted though they were, showed no sign of weakening. All means to beat down their resistance had failed,—the awe-inspiring splendor of the audience-hall with its ecclesiasts in jewelled vestments and its multitude of court dignitaries; the attack on Jewish convictions, the taunts; the threats of violence and of death; the procession of a wretched band of forced converts, paraded before the eyes of the defenders of Judaism to press upon them the conviction that further persistence was in vain, since in their absence their congregations were falling away from the faith. It is no small merit that the Jews at Tortosa refused to yield to this pressure. Not for a moment did a single one waver. There followed, as was usual in these cases, an attack upon the Talmud, and laws further restricting the already restricted Jewish liberties.

Controversial Literature.

It was a time of endless religious disputation. The war of words raged in audience-hall and in pamphlet. Tracts were written and spread broadcast by the clergy in which Judaism was attacked and Christian dogma was supported by references to the Hebrew Bible. Apostates from Judaism wrote treatises in which they asserted the genuineness of their new religion and urged the Jews to abandon the error of their way. Now all this zeal could not but have its influence, and it became necessary for Jewish writers to point out the essential and irreconcilable differences between the Jewish and the Christian conception of God. The more the Church strained every nerve to draw the Jews into its fold, the more the synagogue repelled the attacks on Judaism, opened the eyes of the ignorant, cleared the minds of the confused, and strengthened the wavering. The men who, deeply impressed by the gravity of this crisis, exhorted their brethren to remain faithful, rendered a service which it is impossible to exaggerate. In defiance of the dangers which menaced them, they scattered their inspiring discourses far and wide. Their works were

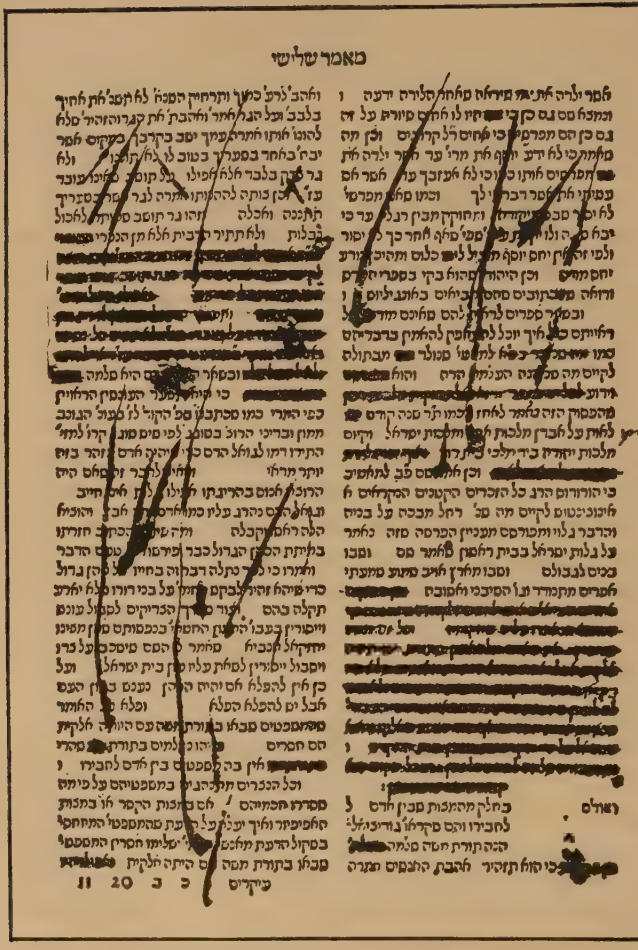
not the happy result of years of calm and leisure and a spirit untroubled by circumstance. These men were spurred into speech and writing by the urgent need of the time; what they put forward was to answer attacks and to protect their faith from danger.

Foremost among the champions of Judaism at Tortosa was Joseph Albo. As he had defended the principles of his religion against attack there, so he felt the need of showing his own people, also, the grounds on which he held Judaism the true religion and Christianity spurious. Accordingly he found it necessary to investigate religion in order to find by what marks a divine law may be distinguished from a human law, and a genuine divine law from one that pretends to be divine. To make this investigation logically complete, he had to show that there must be such a thing as divine law and that such a law must be founded on certain fundamental beliefs or dogmas. If one clearly knew these fundamental beliefs, then one could judge any given law as divine or human, genuine or spurious. Hence Albo named his book "Ikkarim", which means *roots;* it is a "Book of Roots" or of fundamental dogmas, which are the *roots* of religion and without which religion can not exist.

Joseph Albo's "Ikkarim."

There was something quite new and original about this undertaking of Albo's. For while it is true that Maimonides, in his commentary on the Mishnah, had drawn up a list of the articles of the Jewish creed, he had not made the establishment of such dogmas his central theme, as Albo did. Albo's teacher, too, Chasdai Crescas, had written a book disputing Christian dogma, and in his chief work, "Or Adonai", "The Light of the Lord", he had also devoted considerable space to the question of the fundamental dogmas of Judaism. Here he had criticised Maimonides on the ground that he did not, in his thirteen articles, distinguish between what was fundamental and what

Albo's Predecessors.



Censored page from "Ikkarim" of Joseph Albo. (Vienna 1521.)

was derived. It is this suggestion that Albo developed, but he developed it in his own way.

Albo on Heretics.

Now the investigation of the principles of religion, Albo felt, is a hazardous proceeding. One is in danger of being called a heretic if he denies what others consider fundamental dogmas. The truth, however, is that only he is an unbeliever who deliberately and knowingly contradicts the Bible. A person who believes in the Bible, but is led to interpret it mistakenly, and to deny real principles because he thinks that the Bible does not require us to believe them, is guilty of error, but is not a heretic.

His Criticism of his Predecessors.

Having thus made clear his purpose and his point of view, Albo proceeds to criticise the list of dogmas laid down by Maimonides and modified by Crescas. He defines a fundamental principle, an Ikkar or Root, as one upon which something else depends and without which this latter could not exist. From this point of view, it can be seen that all the principles which Maimonides included in his thirteen articles are not fundamental and that, on the other hand, he left out beliefs, such as Tradition and Free Will, which are essential to any divine religion. If it be argued in Maimonides' defense that his intention was to name not only fundamental principles, but also all true beliefs, whether fundamental or derivative, then it is obvious that his list is incomplete, that there are many others which he might have mentioned. Another writer counts twenty-six principles, evidently including everything that occurred to his mind. Still others reduce the fundamental principles to six. To all these lists Albo's objection is that they do not give us a rule by which we can distinguish between the genuine and the spurious religion.

Having shown the defects in the attempts at lists of the fundamental dogmas of Judaism which had been made by his predecessors, Albo looks for a standard in order to dis-

cover what principles a divine law must have. He finds his standard in the Law of Moses, which all religions recognize as divine. Accordingly, if we examine the first four chapters of Genesis, we find in Chapter I, in the description of creation, the principle of the existence of God. Chapters II and III give evidence of the communication of God with man for the purpose of directing his conduct, that is, of revelation. Finally, in Chapter IV, in the story of Cain, we have an illustration of the third dogma, reward and punishment. These three general principles, then, these Ikkarim or Roots, are fundamental to divine religion.

The Three Principles Fundamental to Divine Religion.

Belief in these three fundamental principles, however, is not sufficient. One must also believe in the derivative principles following from them. Thus from the first root, the principle of the existence of God, follow (1) God's unity; (2) His incorporeality; (3) His independence of time, and (4) His perfection, that is, His freedom from defects or weaknesses. The second root principle, Revelation, embraces (1) God's knowledge, (2) His appointment of prophets as instruments of divine Revelation, and (3) the authenticity of God's messenger. Finally, from the third root, divine retribution, Albo derives Providence, in the sense of special Providence. In all there are eleven dogmas. A particular commandment of the Law is neither a fundamental principle nor a derivative. He who transgresses it is a sinner and is punished for his misdeed, but he is not a heretic.

The Derivative Principles.

If a particular command is not a principle, which means also that a fundamental principle is not itself a commandment, the question arises: Whence come these principles and who is to warrant their truth? Albo's answer is that of Judah Halevi and of Crescas: the principles of divine truth are known by experience. Adam knew of the existence of God, of revelation,

The Warrant of Experience and Tradition.

and of reward and punishment from experience. Similarly Noah and Abraham knew them. Nowadays we know by tradition, but the majority of the principles thus known are so certain that there is neither difference of opinion nor doubt entertained by any one concerning them. Such, for example, is the principle of revelation. Other principles again, like the existence of God, can be proved by the method of the philosophers.

The Test of the Messenger of God.

First, therefore, to find out whether a religion professing to be of divine origin really is divine, it must be examined with reference to the three fundamental and the other derivative principles. If it opposes them, it is spurious. If it is not in opposition to the principles in question, it must be further examined to determine whether its founder was a genuine messenger of God. Miracles and signs are no conclusive marks of a prophet, and still less do they prove that the person performing them is a messenger sent by God to announce a law. The test of the prophet and messenger of God must be direct as it was in the case of Moses. The people actually saw that Moses was commissioned by God with a message for them. This opinion is clearly intended as an answer to the Christian claim that Jesus performed miracles and that therefore he is the Messiah.

Additional Dogmas.

In addition to the three fundamental and the eight derived principles of divine legislation, there are six dogmas which every follower of the Mosaic code must believe: (1) creation, (2) the superiority of Moses to all other prophets, (3) the immutability of the Law, (4) the dogma that human perfection can be attained by obeying any one of the commandments of the Law, (5) resurrection, and (6) the Messiah.

It will be seen that the difference between Albo and Maimonides in the question of Jewish dogma is simply one of classification and grading. Albo includes in his enumera-

tion all the thirteen dogmas of Maimonides, with the exception of the fifth, that God alone is to be worshipped; but instead of placing them all on the same level of importance as equally essential to the structure of Judaism, Albo divides them into three categories of descending rank,—fundamental principles, derived principles, and true beliefs. Of Maimonides' list, the last two, belief in the Messiah and in the resurrection, Albo places in the last category. Albo believed in both and held it incumbent upon every Jew to believe in them, but he did not consider the person who mistakenly denied these true beliefs a heretic, as he would be if he denied the existence of God or any other *fundamental* dogma.

The Difference between Albo and Maimonides.

Before concluding his discussion of the fundamental dogmas of religion and of Judaism, Albo attempts to answer two questions which must have perplexed many people in those days of religious disputation and debate. First, is it proper, or perhaps obligatory, to analyze the fundamental principles of one's religion to see whether they are true; and if one does so and finds another religion which seems better, is one permitted to accept it in place of one's own? Albo sees arguments on both sides. If a man is allowed to analyze religions and choose the one that seems best, it will follow that he will never be settled in his belief, that he will never be sure of any religion. On the other hand, if he is not allowed to investigate the foundations of his belief, it follows either that all religions alike bring happiness, no matter how contradictory they are, which Albo considers absurd; or God would seem unfair, if only one religion leads to happiness and no one is allowed to change his religion for one that seems to him more true. This difficulty would be a very real one, Albo tells us, if all the religions in the world were opposed to one another and regarded one another as untrue. But this is not so. All religions agree in respect to one of them. They acknowl-

The Question of Conversion.

edge that it is divine, but they say that it has been superseded. Because of this, every religionist not a Jew must investigate his religion to see whether it is justified in opposing the religion that is acknowledged by all to be divine. Similarly the Jew should investigate to see whether his religion is for a time only, or for all time. In this investigation he must first see whether the religion conforms to the principles of divine religion. If it does, and if in addition it endeavors to order human affairs in accordance with justice and to lead its followers to human perfection, it is still possible that it is the work of a wise man of good character. It is therefore necessary to investigate the founder and find out whether he is a genuine divine messenger.

The Question of the Possibility of More than One Divine Religion.

The other question is whether there can be more than one divine religion. Since the Giver is one, there can apparently be only one religion. But the receivers vary according to differences in inheritance and environment. Hence there may be differences in the divine law according to the character of the people for whom it is intended. These differences, however, must be in those elements which are dependent upon the receiver and not on the Giver; they must be, that is, in particulars and details, not in principles.

The Rest of Albo's Book.

This brings to an end the first part of Albo's work and the only part of his teaching that can be called his own. His friends, he tells us, urged him to proceed further and discuss in detail the principles, fundamental and derived, and the true beliefs which he had barely enumerated in the first part. He therefore added three sections, each devoted to one of the fundamental dogmas. In these sections, however, he follows Maimonides and other philosophers, without suggesting anything new.

Albo's style is easy and popular. He explains every philosophic idea by striking and numerous illustrations, and this method, while it makes him rather wordy, adds to the

Albo's Influence.

interest of his exposition. Accordingly, although modern readers find his arguments at times exceedingly wearisome, his book came to be a standard popular treatise and wielded considerable influence in shaping the religious thought of the Jews. Even those critics who credit Albo with nothing original or valuable in the realm of philosophy, acknowledge that his "Book of Roots" marks an epoch in Jewish theology.

Suggestions for Further Reading.

Graetz: *Geschichte,* Vol. VIII, p. 168 ff.

Graetz: *History of the Jews,* Vol. IV, p. 239 ff.

Husik, I.: *History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy,* pp. 406-27.

Jewish Encyclopedia: Vol. I, p. 324, Article *Albo, Joseph.*

Lea, H. C.: *History of the Inquisition of Spain,* Vol. I, Ch. 3.

Schechter, S.: *Studies,* Vol. I, p. 171.

Schindler, S.: *Dissolving Views,* pp. 136-148.

XVIII.

ISAAC ABRAVANEL.

In 1469, the marriage of the Infanta Isabella of Castile with Don Ferdinand of Aragon united Catholic Spain and gave renewed impetus and fresh vigor to the hatred of everything that was not Christian. The Church had by this time convinced the people that kindness to the Jew was a sin against God. The old-time friendliness between Jew and Christian was, for the most part, a thing of the past. The distrusted Maranos, who lived in hundreds and thousands throughout Aragon and Castile, were too prosperous. Many dared hold high positions at court, in the army, and even in the Church! Against them, priests thundered from the altar steps, denouncing them as apostates and stubborn heretics. They called upon the faithful to purify the land from the pollution of Judaism, secret as well as open. The people believed, not without cause, that the Maranos professed Christianity with their lips while they despised it in their souls. Fanaticism joined with envy and greed, and from the results of these mingled passions the Christianity of the converts did not save them. On the paltriest pretexts their houses were plundered and burned, and they themselves hunted to death like wild beasts.

A United Catholic Spain.

Now for a long time the clergy had been persistently urging the rulers of Spain to establish in their country a court that should bring to trial Christians suspected of leanings towards Judaism, and inflict upon them severe pun-

ishment. For many years, even fifteenth century Spain had been reluctant to set in motion machinery so terrible. Gradually, however, the preachers of discord between Christian and Jew had worked upon the Spanish character, until now it was prepared to accept this awful tribunal. Finally, Ferdinand and Isabella gave their consent, and towards the end of 1480 the Inquisition was introduced into Spain.

The Spanish Inquisition.

Now began an era of terror. All loyal Spaniards were urged to keep watchful eyes on their neighbors and to denounce them to the Inquisition if they seemed guilty of the slightest lapse from the most rigid adherence to Christianity. All New Christians were to be regarded with suspicion as probable apostates, whose baptism served only to bring them within the power of the Inquisition. They might be regular in church attendance and generous to church and friar, and yet secretly be followers of the Law of Moses. To detect and punish these apostates was the business of the Inquisition, and the simplest acts were often accepted as proofs of guilt. If a Christian noticed that his neighbors put on fresh garments on Saturday, or changed their table linen on that day, or called their children by Jewish names, or blessed their children without making the sign of the cross, then it was his duty to denounce them at once to the Inquisition. From the hillsides overlooking Spanish villages, zealots peered down to spy out the chimneys from which no smoke rose on Saturday. In the market-place, they lurked at Easter time, watching for those who bought the green herbs that might deck some secret Passover table.

A Reign of Terror.

The unhappy people who fell under the shadow of these suspicions were at once seized by the officers of the Inquisition and cast into the dungeons of secret prisons. From the moment of their arrest they were allowed to exchange a word with no one. They

Secret Arrest.

could learn nothing of those they held dear, nor could those who loved them learn of their fate. Once accused, they were already dead to the world.

The Trial.

Then came a travesty of a trial. In modern courts, the accused is assumed to be innocent until he is proved guilty; in the Inquisition, the accused was assumed to be guilty, and the aim of the judges was to force him to confess his guilt. Although there was a pretense of a desire for justice, the helpless victim was practically robbed of every opportunity for defense. Against him, any one was accepted as witness; for him, on the contrary, none who could be at all serviceable to him were allowed to testify, on the ground that their evidence would be untrustworthy. Nor was he allowed to know who had denounced him to the Inquisition or who were the witnesses against him. In his pitiable attempt to protect himself, he had to strike out blindly in the dark. Throughout his trial, from the first arrest to the final reading of the sentence, every effort was made to induce him to confess his sin and profess repentance. Upon him were brought to bear the awe-inspiring solemnities of the trial, the horror of prolonged imprisonment, the threat of torture. If he still proved obdurate, he was taken to the torture-chamber, stripped, and tied to the rack, while sharp cords, two on each arm and two on each leg, were bound about him and twisted with a short lever. Or his hands would be tied behind his back, and then, with a cord about his wrists, he would be hoisted from the floor and kept at tiptoe, while his tormentors repeatedly admonished him to confess the truth. If this failed, increasing weights were attached to his feet and he was kept suspended. Cords rasped through the flesh to the bone; limbs were wrenched to the breaking; there was not a part of the body that had not its due share of agony. If sinews and nerves could withstand tortures such as these, then red hot pincers tore the quivering flesh

The apostate who early confessed his sins and was now penitent could be received back as a loyal son of the Church only after humiliating penance. He was made to appear in a penitential garment of yellow, with a candle in his hand, and publicly abjure his errors. When continued torture was necessary to force a tardy confession from the accused, scourging was a favorite penalty which was mercilessly employed. Children and women were not spared. To the Jew, with his keen sense of personal dignity, public flogging was a terrible disgrace, and those who were condemned to it regarded death itself as a mercy.

The Penalty.

When all the efforts of the torturer failed to extort a confession, then, if the Inquisition really believed that torture proved anything, the accused should have been held innocent of the charges brought against him, and he should have been acquitted. The Church, however, condemned as an impenitent heretic the man who, in the face of what the Church was pleased to call competent testimony, persistently denied his guilt. And for the impenitent heretic there was no alternative save burning alive.

The Fate of the Heretic.

The Auto da Fe—the Act of Faith—was the name by which the Spanish Inquisition dignified the ceremony of burning. "It was an elaborate public solemnity, carefully devised to inspire awe for the mysterious authority of the Inquisition, and to impress the populace with a wholesome abhorrence of heresy." The victims were marched on foot to the public square, their hands tied with ropes across their breast, wearing penitential garments of yellow, painted with hideous figures of devils and leaping flames. There at the principal square of the city were two great platforms,—one for the victims and their attendants, the other for the Inquisitors and other officials, the clergy resplendent in their gorgeous vestments, with banners and pennons. From the windows of the houses

The Auto da Fe.

surrounding the square, the notables of the place, with their families, looked down upon the spectacle, and the street below was packed with the humbler populace, eager to enjoy the edifying sight.

The proceedings commenced with a sermon, preached by one of the Inquisitors or by some eloquent friar, who dwelt on the supreme importance of preserving the Christian faith in its purity and exterminating heresy and heretics. Then the sentences were read. It was part of the ghastly mockery of the whole procedure that the Inquisition itself nominally did not execute the sentence of death, but turned its victims over to the State, to secular justice.

When the sentences had been read, the condemned were taken to the place of burning, marched through hostile crowds, which, enraged by the sermon and the ceremony, tried to stone the victims, and had to be restrained by the officials. At the place of burning, the heretics were given to the flames, or if at the last moment they became penitent, they were first strangled and then burned. To the last breath the friars exhausted every effort to bring about repentance.

Even the dead were not beyond the reach of the Inquisition. The bodies of proselytes who were suspected of having died in heresy were torn from their graves and burnt, and the possessions in the hands of their heirs were confiscated.

Soon all Spain flamed with the baleful fires of these Autos da Fe. Thousands of Maranos, forced converts or descendants of forced converts, met their death at the stake. Under Torquemada, appointed Inquisitor General in 1483, the fell work reached its greatest cruelty. A Jew of that time writes: "In these days the smoke of the martyr's pyre rises unceasingly to heaven in all the Spanish Kingdoms. . . . One-third of the Maranos have perished in the flames, another third wander homeless over the earth seeking where they may hide them-

Torquemada.

selves, and the remainder live in perpetual terror of a trial." The Pope himself urged clemency, and hinted that Ferdinand and Isabella were actuated "by greed for earthly possessions rather than by zeal for the faith." There was violent opposition, too, from humbler Christians whom all the endeavors of the Church had been unable to turn into unrelenting enemies of their Jewish neighbors. But still the cruel work went on.

The Motive.

There can be no doubt that there were many men in the service of the Inquisition whose motives were not greed for Jewish gold, or envy, or hatred, or fiendish love of cruelty; men who believed that this work of blood was work acceptable to God, the All-Merciful. These men, who regarded any difference from the Christian faith as the greatest of crimes before God and man, and its punishment as a pious duty, felt justified in any cruelty. The burning of the impenitent at once avenged an offense against God and preserved the community from danger of infection by a heretic. Their object was the saving of souls: this was the duty to which they felt themselves devoted.

Jews not the Only Sufferers.

We must remember, too, that the Maranos were not the only victims who rotted in Inquisition dungeons, were maimed on Inquisition torture-racks, were burned on Inquisition pyres. Forced converts from Mohammedanism went the same sad road, and even Christians who, although they had no drop of Jewish or Mohammedan blood in their veins, were suspected of entertaining ideas not strictly orthodox, suffered the same rigor.

The Fall of Granada.

And yet, in spite of the Inquisition, there still remained Maranos in Spain. But they must have known by this time that the end was not far distant. It was hastened by an event that sounded the death-knell, too, of another faith on the Spanish peninsula. The Mohammedans had been driven ever farther and farther south, and now the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella were

storming their last citadel, the lovely city of Granada. After a long and bloody resistance, this, too, fell, and in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella, amid ringing of bells and waving of banners, made their entry into Granada. The Mohammedan dominion in Spain "had vanished like a dream in an Arabian Nights' legend." Spain was a wholly Christian country.

This war against the Mohammedans had been of the nature of a crusade against unbelief, of a holy war for the spreading of the Christian faith. Now again we hear the fatal reasoning of the Crusades. Are the unbelieving Moslems to be vanquished, and the unbelieving Jews to go free in the land? Torquemada had long been urging that the Jews should be expelled from Spain. Now from the palace of the Alhambra in Granada there was suddenly issued by their Catholic Majesties a proclamation that within four months the Spanish Jews were to leave every portion of Castile, Aragon, Sicily, and Sardinia, under pain of death. The proclamation did not accuse the Jews of usury, or of crucifying Christian children; the only crime it set forth against them was that of remaining faithful to their religion, and of seeking to retain their Marano brethren in their ancient faith. Because the falling away of New Christians into "Jewish unbelief" was encouraged by their intercourse with Jews, their majesties had resolved to banish the Jews from the kingdom.

The Proclamation of Exile.

The despair of the Spanish Jews was indescribable. In their extremity they turned to one man who, if any, could save them. At the very time when Torquemada was plotting the destruction of the Jews, a Jew occupied an important post at the court of Spain, and enjoyed the unbounded confidence of his royal master. He was just another such man as Chasdai ibn Shaprut had been in the tenth century, and Samuel the Nagid in the eleventh.

Don Isaac Abravanel was born in Lisbon, in 1437, of a

celebrated family of scholars and statesmen. He was given a liberal education, and to it he brought a mind clear and keen and an ardent enthusiasm for Judaism. His early years he devoted to the study of Jewish religious philosophy. But it was more as a man of action that he shone. While he was still young, he showed so thorough an understanding of finance and the affairs of state that he attracted the attention of Alfonso V of Portugal. Alfonso made him treasurer and consulted him on all state matters.

Don Isaac Abravanel.

His great wealth and high position he used in the interest of his king, his country, and his people. His warm heart, which beat for all sufferers, felt especial sympathy for the Jewish slaves whom his royal master brought from Africa with captive Moors after a successful war. He set about not only to redeem the captives, but also to clothe them, lodge them, and maintain them until they were able to support themselves.

A Friend of his People.

After the death of Alfonso, however, came dark days for Abravanel. The new king, eager for his great possessions, unjustly accused him. Warned in time, Abravanel fled to Spain, glad to escape with his life, though at the cost of all his great wealth. At Toledo, welcomed by enthusiastic fellow-students, he exchanged statesmanship for the study of the Torah.

From Portugal to Spain.

From the midst of these quiet labors, however, he was called by Ferdinand, who knew of his ability and his honesty, to take charge of the finances of Spain. Under his care they prospered, and his sovereigns found his wisdom and his prudent counsel invaluable. And here, as in Portugal, he was as a wall of protection to the Jewish people.

At the Court of Ferdinand.

Therefore when the blow of banishment from Spain fell upon them, it was to him that they turned. And Abravanel left nothing undone to induce the King to revoke the inhu-

man decree. Arguments and persuasion failing, he threw himself at the feet of his sovereign and offered great sums of gold to ransom his people from exile. As the avaricious Ferdinand wavered, Torquemada, the arch-enemy, entered the presence chamber, and, with uplifted crucifix, cried: "Judas Iscariot sold his master for thirty pieces of silver. Will your majesties sell him for thirty thousand ducats? Here he is; take him and sell him!" These dramatic words decided the fate of the Jews. Abravanel's plea was denied. Heralds went through the whole country proclaiming that the Jews must leave Spain; that whoever of them was found on Spanish soil after the appointed time must suffer death.

Abravanel Pleads in Vain.

Thus the Spanish Jews were to leave the land that had been their home for centuries, the land of which they might well have sung, "Land where my fathers died," for in its soil rested their forefathers for at least fifteen hundred years. Thus they were driven out of the country towards whose wealth and power and culture they had so largely contributed. Stunned by the blow, day and night they wept at the graves of their ancestors. And when they rallied from the first shock and commenced preparations for departure, their distress was increased by edicts that robbed them of their possessions and sent them forth almost penniless. They were permitted to sell their great estates and their fine houses—but they were forbidden to take with them gold or silver. Accordingly they were forced to barter their homes for beasts of burden, their vineyards for a little cloth or linen. "Their synagogues," a Christian scholar ironically writes, "they were not allowed to sell, the Christians taking them and converting them into churches, wherein to worship a God of justice and love."

Further Cruel Edicts.

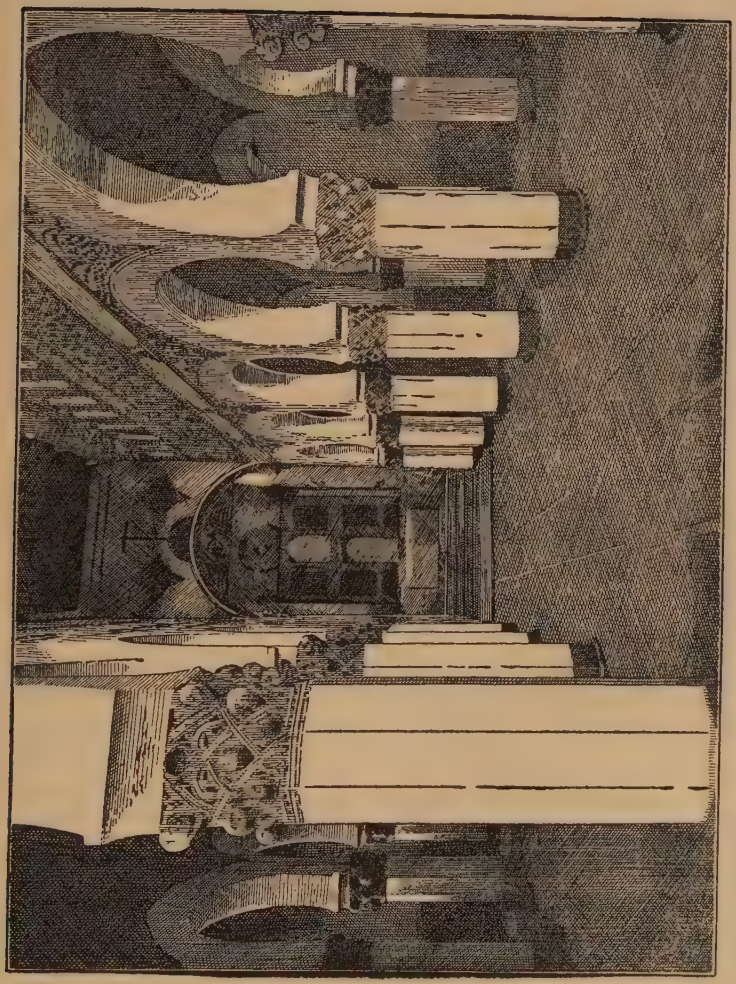
And still there remained open an easy way to end all their sufferings. Friars beset them on every side, preaching Chris-

"We Will Go Forth in the Name of the Lord."

tianity; calling upon the miserable exiles to turn to the cross for succor. If they would only be baptized, they could remain in the country to which every fiber of their being clung. But in spite of their terrible plight, the Jews remained steadfast. Very few allowed themselves to be tempted by the monks; and if one of these was a Jew high in honor at court, it is urged in extenuation that Isabella, who was loath to lose his services, threatened if he persisted in his faith, to adopt still harsher measures against his people, and that he, fearing the worst, submitted. But the converts were very few. The people encouraged one another, saying, "Let us be strong for our religion and for the Law of our fathers, before our enemies. If they will let us live, we shall live; if they kill us, then we shall die. We will not desecrate the covenant of our God; our heart shall not fail us. We will go forth in the name of the Lord." In the whole range of history is there any parallel to heroism and constancy such as this?

The Doom of Spain.

So the holy soil of Spain was no longer polluted by the presence of a Jew. The very name of the Jews died out of the country in which they had played so prominent a part. Synagogues, as we have seen, were changed to churches. The beautiful synagogue of Toledo, with its Moorish arches, its exquisite columns, its graceful proportions, is, to this day, transformed into a church, a magnificent ornament to the city. In Seville, Granada, Cordova, Barcelona, every trace of the Jews was lost. But was Spain happy? Towns, bereft of their Jewish citizens, fell into insignificance. The sick looked in vain for physicians. Not only physicians, but also capitalists, men of learning, and even farmers and artisans were lost to Spain with the Jews. The people of Sicily complained that they lacked craftsmen capable of supplying farm implements and equipment for ships. In spite of the treasures that soon



Interior of the Church of Santa Maria La Blanca in Toledo. (Formerly a Synagogue.)

flowed in from America, Spain went gradually down to ruin and disgrace. Could those unhappy exiles of ours have looked far ahead into the centuries to come, they would have seen a strange sight. They would have seen, in the nineteenth century, proud Spain extending a hand of welcome more than once to the Jews. They would have seen, in the twentieth century, during the Balkan war, Spain anxious to gain the sympathy of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, Jews descended from the outcasts of the fifteenth century. And they would have seen these descendants of theirs refusing to return to Spain. Memories of the Inquisition and the exile still throb too painfully, even after the lapse of over five centuries, to permit the Jew with Spanish blood in his veins to trust the hospitality of Spain.

The Jews and the Discovery of America.

And could those unflinching sufferers but have seen another sight! On the very day after they were thrust out of Spain, on the third of August, Christopher Columbus sailed to seek an ocean-route to India, and to discover a New World, a world of refuge for all those oppressed for conscience' sake. Nor was the expedition of Columbus connected with the Jews merely in point of time. The Jews of Spain had long been interested in great exploits of this kind. They had equipped and manned fleets. A Jew of Barcelona "had navigated the whole then known world," according to a record of Jaime III, last king of Mallorca, in 1334. The making of maps had been almost entirely in the hands of the Jews. One Jew was so prominent in this art that the people called him "the map-Jew." His maps were highly prized, not only by navigators, but also by princes and kings.

Financial Assistance.

Columbus himself wrote, "I have had constant relations with many learned men, clergy and laymen, Jews and Moors, and many others." The Jewish astronomer, Zacuto of Salamanca, whose astronomical tables always accompanied Columbus on his voyages,

declared in favor of Columbus and asserted his belief that the "distant Indies, separated from us by great seas and vast tracts of land, can be reached, though the enterprise is hazardous." Distinguished Spanish Jews were among the first to give Columbus the financial assistance that he required. At that time neither Ferdinand nor Isabella had enough money to equip a fleet; and it was Louis Santangel who, out of his own pocket, advanced the necessary funds—nor were the queen's jewels demanded as security, the popular story to the contrary.

Sailors of Jewish Stock.

You will remember, too, that it was not easy for Columbus to find men willing to accompany him on his perilous voyage; even prisoners were released from prison on condition that they join his crew. Is it not natural, then, that Jews, under the ban of expulsion, homeless and desperate, should enroll themselves in his fleet? Among the companions of the explorer whose names have come down to us there were several men of Jewish stock. The ship-physician and the surgeon were of Jewish lineage, and the interpreter was a recently baptized Jew. And so Columbus, fitted out with gold that a Marano had lent the King, guided by Jewish maps, and accompanied by Jewish navigators, set sail for a land which the victims of Old World persecution were eventually to find

> ". . . bright
> With Freedom's holy light."

The Tragic Fate of the Exiles.

The exiles, however, were not cheered on their way by visions such as these. Before them they saw nothing but the utter degradation to which their brethren had been reduced in other lands, the savage hostility that would repulse them everywhere. In Spain, although there were many Christians who pitied them, no hand could be raised to help them, for Torquemada had forbidden any Christian to hold any communication with Jews,

or to give them food or shelter, or to aid them in any way. So they went, disregarding the wealth they left behind,—great and lowly, old and young; some sick, some dying. Most of them had tragic ends, robbery and murder by sea and in the lands where they sought refuge. Many more died on the terrible journey from hunger, exposure, and sickness. Their misery was almost unendurable. A rabbi whose father was one of the exiles describes the sufferings of his race. Some, he writes, were ripped open by cruel men who believed that they had swallowed their gold to hide it; some were consumed by hunger and the plague; some were cast naked on the isles of the sea by the captains of the vessels on which they sailed; some were sold as slaves; and some were thrown into the sea. Among those who were thrust out penniless at a foreign port was a Jew with his old father and his young son. And the old man was fainting with hunger, for they had no bread, and in all that strange country there was no one who would share a crust with them. Then the younger man went and sold his son to a baker for bread that he might give it to his father, so that the old man might eat and not die. And it came to pass, when he returned to his old father, that he found him fallen down dead. And the son rent his clothes for grief. And he returned unto the baker to take his own son again, but the baker would not give him back. And he cried out with a loud and bitter cry for his son, but there was none to deliver.

Few stories as sad as this could be told, however, of the refugees in lands where there were Jews. To prevent such distress as this, the Jews all over the world made superhuman efforts. In some places they even sold the gold from the synagogue ornaments to raise money to ransom Spanish exiles who had been enslaved. The sons of one philanthropist actually took

The Charity of the Jews of the World.

up their abode on the quay, so that there would be no delay in providing for exiles who sought their port.

Those exiles who went to Portugal were exposed to horrors as agonizing as any that they had suffered in Spain.

The Exiles in Portugal.

By order of the king, Jewish children were torn from their parents and brought up as Christians. Soon, in 1498, the Jews were expelled from Portugal. Happier, however, were these exiles who went to Italy. Here the Popes and the states had for a long time left the Jews undisturbed. Laws against the Jews existed, of course, but in no country were they so frequently disregarded as in Italy. Whatever the cause, whether it was the superior enlightenment of the Italian people or the internal dissensions that might well have distracted their attention from the less pressing problem, the Jews flourished. In Dante's time, Immanuel of Rome had been the friend of the great poet and, himself a poet, had written witty, humorous, satirical verse in Hebrew and in Italian. He was the author of Biblical commentaries also, but their sole value lay in making accessible to others his own wide range of reading. It is as a poet that he is remembered, a writer of light, frivolous verse which shocked the serious.

It was from Jewish teachers that Pico della Mirandola, the Italian scholar, from whom the English poet, Edmund Spenser, gained much of his philosophy, had learned Hebrew and Hebrew literature. Pico, it is true, searched Jewish writings mainly for proof of Christian doctrines, so that the Jews might be "refuted by their own books", but in the process he not only learned Jewish mysticism, but also learned to find in his Jewish teachers honored friends. Nor were these friendships between Jewish scholars and Christian scholars at all rare in Italy.

So it was that the exiles from Spain found welcome and protection in Naples, in Ferrara, in Tuscany. Among them was Abravanel. At Naples he was kindly received by the

king and was soon raised to high office. After the city was taken by the French, he loyally accompanied his unfortunate king in his flight. Later we find him established in Venice, busy with his scholarly work, laboring over his commentaries on the Bible until, in 1509, death ended his varied and eventful career.

The Exiles in Italy.

This man, who gave up wealth and position to remain true to his faith, became one of the most popular writers of Jewish literature. His profound knowledge of Talmudical literature and of secular learning made him an instructive writer, and his enthusiasm for Judaism made him an inspiring one. Because he had mingled much with the world, had seen history in the making, and had himself played not an unimportant part in shaping events, he brought to his study of the Bible a correct idea of the influence of the political and social life of a people upon its literature. He recognized the value of prefacing each book of the Bible with an introduction stating the character of the work, the date of composition, and the author's purpose in writing it. In addition to Jewish sources of knowledge, he consulted Christian commentators and quoted them. He contributed to the study of the Bible little that was original, but his self-sacrificing loyalty gave him a far-reaching personal influence over the people. His thoroughness was appreciated, also, by Christian scholars, who studied his works closely.

Abravanel the Author.

Abravanel felt keenly the deep hopelessness and despair of the Jews throughout the world in the years which followed the expulsion from Spain. To give them new strength and hope, he emphasized especially the belief in the Messiah. He wrote no less than three works all devoted to setting forth the Jewish belief in the Messiah and the Messianic age. He collected all the Messianic passages in the Bible, and he also gave the doctrine concerning the Messiah as he found it in the Talmud,

The Messianic Hope.

and the descriptions of the Messianic age as it was pictured by the rabbis of the Middle Ages. These works of his were widely read, and they accomplished their purpose of giving the people renewed faith in a brighter, happier future.

Of the sons of Isaac Abravanel, the youngest, Samuel, occupied an influential position at the court of Naples. His influence was due not only to his distinguished ancestry, but also to his own fine qualities. Of his great riches and his power he made the best possible use. He was a generous patron of Jewish learning; and his wife, through her influence with the daughter of the viceroy of Naples, who loved the Jewess with the devotion of a daughter, was able to intervene when Charles V issued a decree banishing the Jews from Naples.

Samuel Abravanel.

Other and greater figures loom up in Italy. There was Elijah Levita, the great grammarian, who died in Venice in 1549, after a long life of varied labors. At Rome he taught in the palace of a cardinal, at whose request he produced a grammatical treatise, one of a long succession of valuable works on grammar and kindred subjects. He had the honor of refusing the position of professor of Hebrew at the University of Paris, offered him by Francis I, because he was unwilling to live in a city where his people were forbidden to dwell. He also declined invitations from cardinals, bishops, and princes to become professor of Hebrew in Christian colleges.

Distinguished Italian Jews: Elijah Levita.

Azariah dei Rossi, born in Mantua about the year 1513, was a man of the highest intellectual attainments. He had an insatiable longing for knowledge and was everywhere regarded as a prodigy of learning. He was a student of medicine, history, and Jewish and Roman antiquities. He was well acquainted with Hebrew literature and also with Latin literature, including the writings of the Fathers of the Church. In his work he

Azariah dei Rossi.

followed scientific methods of investigation and showed an original and vigorous mind.

Then in the sixteenth century dark days came for the Jews of Italy. Two popes, Paul IV and Pius V, devised plans to drive the Jew from the rest of the world, to set him apart from his kind. Laws were repeated that threatened with the most severe punishment Jewish doctors who ministered to Christian patients. Jewish books were consigned to the flames. No longer could Jewish synagogues stand side by side with Christian churches. No longer could the palace of the Christian and the mansion of the Jew be neighbors, and Christians hold friendly intercourse with their Jewish fellow-citizens. The Jew was to be shut off by himself because he was a menace to the community, undesirable, dangerous to its peace. For the good of society he was to be ostracized.

Persecutions in Italy.

It was near the iron foundry or *geto* in Venice that the first Jewish quarter in Italy was established, in 1516, and from this circumstance probably comes the name by which the quarter is most generally known. The ghetto was not, however, exclusively an Italian institution. We find it in other countries under different names: in England it was the Jewry; in Germany, the Judengasse. The brand that it put upon the Jew, atrociously unjust as it was, was not the only ill that it brought him. As time went on, the population of the ghetto grew, and yet its boundaries remained the same as before. This resulted in the most terrible overcrowding. The ghettos, moreover, as you may well believe, were not situated in the most healthful and pleasant parts of the towns. They were usually on the narrowest streets, in the poorest neighborhoods. In one town, 4,000 people lived in 190 houses, in a gloomy street so narrow that the houses met overhead and a wagon could not turn in it. In the infamous Roman

Official Institution of the Ghetto.

ghetto, the Tiber yearly overflowed its banks, making the whole district a plague-stricken swamp.

Thus the Jews were set apart as a race outside the pale of humanity, shut out from the world by menacing walls. Yet we have to record a humiliation more galling still. Much earlier than the institution of the ghetto, the Church had feared the danger of the Jew mingling freely with his Christian fellow-citizens, so like them in outward appearance that even the most pious and observant Christian might innocently associate with a Jew, not being able to tell at a glance that he was a member of the accursed race. So that the Christian might no longer be exposed to this source of contamination, the Church had decreed, in 1215, that Jews and Moslems must be marked off from other men by a badge prominently displayed. Sometimes it was a wheel-shaped badge, red, yellow, or parti-colored, fixed upon the breast. Sometimes it was square and placed upon the shoulder or the hat. In some places it was a pointed yellow cap; in others, a hideous horn-shaped head-dress, red or green. Its common color was yellow. But whatever its shape or its color, the Jew-sign was an invitation for the street urchin to mock at its wearer and pelt him with mud, a sign for the rabble to fall upon him and brutally beat or even kill him, an opportunity for the higher classes or society to regard him as an outcast, a pariah. This badge Paul IV reintroduced.

These two crowning humiliations, "the ghetto's plague", "the garb's disgrace", as Browning called them, were not all. A method of conversion satirized by Browning in his poem, "Holy-Cross Day", was forcing the Jews to attend sermons against Judaism. This forced attendance, of course, only contributed to make the tormented people hold the more firmly to their own faith. Browning imagined the Jew, haled unwillingly to the church of his oppressor, thinking bitterly of all the ignominy he had to suffer. He represented him as remembering a particularly brutal act of persecution

that prevailed for a time in Rome. Here, at the time of Lent, at least eight Jews were forced to run foot-races along the whole length of the race-course. Half-clad, jeered at and whipped, they were compelled to run until they often succumbed to their exertions and fell dead on the course. Mr. Israel Zangwill gives a vivid picture of this grotesque mockery in his "Joseph the Dreamer", one of the stories in "The Dreamers of the Ghetto."

Yet at the end of the sixteenth century and during the seventeenth, several Jewish writers attained fame. Leon of Modena, scholar, rabbi, and poet, was a man of brilliant mentality but unstable character. His fame as a poet opened doors to him even in the highest circles of Venetian society and brought him noblemen and archbishops as pupils. His life was checkered by many trials, but he continued to relieve the distress of others and to devote himself to his studies and to his work as a writer. He wrote many books in which he showed himself an antagonist of rabbinism and mysticism. He took the position that the rabbis of any period have a right to modify Talmudical institutions. He contended, like the Karaites, that the rabbis often followed the letter of the Law to the neglect of the spirit. He enumerated the laws which in his opinion had to be reformed in order to bring later Judaism into harmony with the Bible. Among other things he proposed the simplification of prayers, of synagogue service, and of the dietary laws. He derided the Haggadah, although he conceded its moral teaching; and he threw his influence against mysticism.

Leon of Modena.

Even more cultured and certainly more profound than Modena was his friend and disciple, Joseph Solomon Delmedigo. Unfortunately he was unsettled in his convictions and restless all his life. He had a special aptitude for mathematics and studied

Joseph Solomon Delmedigo.

astronomy under no less a master than the great Galileo. He wrote a number of scientific works.

Two Celebrated Jewesses.

Two women of Italy deserve especial mention, Deborah Ascarelli and Sarah Copia Sullam. Deborah Ascarelli lived in Venice. She wrote original poems and also translations, which, although they kept faithfully to their Hebrew originals, were yet spirited compositions, full of poetic fire.

Sarah Copia Sullam was also a poetess. By the time she was fifteen years old, she could read the Bible, the Greek and Latin classics, and the masterpieces of Spanish literature, all in the original languages; and she was known in her native Venice for her poems in Italian. This brilliant promise she fulfilled throughout her life. And added to her unusual gifts of mind were a voice of rare sweetness, musical ability, and social charm and distinction. An epic poem which a Genoese monk had written on the subject of Esther aroused the gratitude of the Jewess, and she wrote to the author. He, unfortunately, was at once filled with zeal to win the poetess for the church. But Sarah was firm in her allegiance to Judaism. At another time, accused by a priest of having denied the immortality of the soul, she defended herself in a sarcastic rejoinder that showed her power of clear and logical thinking.

But this is looking far forward from the time when the Italian states, which had earlier opened their gates to the exiles from Spain, were closing them on all Jews, and when it seemed almost as though there were to be an end of Jews in Christian Europe.

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XIX.

JOSEPH CARO.

Most fortunate were those exiles from Spain and from other Christian countries who turned to Mohammedan Turkey. Here the sultan exclaimed in amazement: "You call Ferdinand a wise king! Why, he has made his country poor and enriched ours by these useful subjects!" He saw that, exiled and impoverished as the Spanish Jews were, they had lost none of their dignity. Their sufferings had not broken their spirit.

In Mohammedan Turkey.

In Turkey, in spite of occasional persecution, the Jews flourished. They became merchants and artisans, physicians and teachers, financiers, and statesmen. And soon the Jews of Christian Europe, outcast and despised, facing beggary, exile, and death, heard, in the extremity of their peril, a voice of encouragement. They heard that, in the land of the Crescent, a Jew, who would have been burned at the stake in the land of the Inquisition, had risen to a position of influence and power at court. They heard of the love and pity with which he remembered his unhappy brethren of the West.

Hope in the East.

João Miquez, or—to call him by his Hebrew name—Joseph Nasi, was born in Portugal at the beginning of the sixteenth century, member of a Marano family that had fled to Portugal from Spain during the persecutions towards the end of the fifteenth century. To escape religious intolerance in Portugal, Joseph

Joseph Nasi, Marano Banker.

emigrated to Antwerp, where, in partnership with a kinsman, he established an extensive banking-house. He was a man of handsome presence and pleasant manners, and he soon won the favor of the nobility, even of Queen Mary, Regent of the Netherlands. Nevertheless he felt oppressed by the pretense of Christianity which he was obliged to continue even in Antwerp, which was then Spanish ground, and he determined to leave Flanders for Turkey. With him in this enterprise was his aunt, Gracia Mendesia, a woman of a greatness of mind and heart that commanded the admiration and love of all. In the face of suspicion and danger, she contrived to furnish poor Maranos with means to flee from the clutches of the Inquisition. A Jewish poet of the time speaks of her as a Deborah, an Esther.

The Flight from Lands of Persecution.

With much difficulty the distinguished travelers succeeded in reaching Venice. There Gracia, in consequence of the incautious statements of a niece, was imprisoned on the charge of relapse into Judaism, and her property confiscated. Joseph spared no effort to set his noble kinswoman free. He appealed to Sultan Sulaiman II at Constantinople. Through the sultan's court physician, a Jew, he drew the sultan's attention to the advantages which Turkey would gain if the Nasi family and other rich Jewish families should settle there. Joseph succeeded in inducing the sultan to embrace Gracia's cause. Sulaiman sent ambassadors to Venice to demand the release of Donna Gracia and the restoration of her property. After two years of negotiations, Gracia was free to proceed to Turkey. The next year she was followed by Joseph, who abandoned forever his Christian name, publicly assumed his Hebrew name, and married Reyna, the beautiful, much-courted daughter of Gracia.

Joseph came to Turkey like a prince, and at the court of Sulaiman he was soon taken into favor. He served the sultan well by means of his wide acquaintance with the

affairs of Christian Europe, and the sultan was not unmindful of what he owed to Joseph's wise counsel. Salim, the heir apparent to the throne, in return for Joseph's championship of his cause to his father, the sultan, bestowed upon the Jew the high honor and emolument of membership in his body-guard, and the sultan himself gave the Jewish favorite a tract of land on the Sea of Tiberias in Palestine. Here Joseph planned to found a colony which should serve as a refuge for the oppressed Jews of Europe. He issued a proclamation to the Jews offering the protection of his new Jewish community to all the persecuted who were willing to labor as farmers or artisans. Principally with money from Gracia's large properties, he rebuilt the walls of the ruined city of Tiberias, and planted mulberry trees so that his colonists might raise silkworms.

A Refuge for the Jews of Europe.

He probably had especially in mind the welfare of the unhappy Jews of Italy who had much to endure under Pope Paul IV. Ever since his departure from Italy he had corresponded with the Jews of that country. He knew their sufferings. He himself, moreover, had experienced a little of what they had to bear, and he had the warmest sympathy for them. To transport the emigrants to their new home, ships lay moored in the ports of Venice and Ancona. The little community of Cori, numbering about two hundred, took advantage of the opportunity in a body. And when Pius V banished all Jews from the Papal States, Turkey with its princely Jewish benefactor seemed indeed the only haven.

A Haven for the Persecuted Jews of Italy.

After Sulaiman's death, Joseph rose to even greater power. The grateful Salim made him Duke of Naxos and of the Cyclades, twelve islands in all. Despite the hostility and intrigues of ambassadors from Christian courts, he was a personage of such importance that great European powers found it necessary to secure

A Power behind the Throne.

his good offices. In 1566 he encouraged the Protestant council of Antwerp to hold out against the Catholic king of Spain, meanwhile urging the sultan to declare war on Spain. He did not, however, succeed in obtaining a declaration of war against Spain, as he did in the case of Venice, from which the sultan wrested the island of Cyprus.

Joseph accomplished nothing great or lasting for Judaism, but a certain Jewish interest attaches to him. At a time when the panorama of Jewish history presents little but the drab tints of grim suffering, his figure flashes across it, picturesque and romantic, full of the vivid color of the East. His scheme for the relief of the persecuted, moreover, was a practical one, and he was able to render other material service to his people. He was generous in his support of Talmudic scholars, and his large Jewish library was open to the public. Yet it is not the Duke of Naxos, handsome, rich, and powerful, who makes Turkey memorable in Jewish history, but men of very different calibre.

Philanthropist and Benefactor.

Joseph ben Ephraim Caro was born in Spain or in Portugal, probably in Spain, only four years before the expulsion of the Jews. When the edict of exile came, the parents with the four-year-old boy began their wanderings, and after much suffering reached Nicopolis, in European Turkey. There Joseph received his first instruction from his father, Ephraim, an eminent Talmudist. Nicopolis, however, seems not to have had an atmosphere favorable to the sort of life that Caro wished to lead, for its inhabitants are reported indifferent to the study of the Torah and uncharitable to the poor. Caro left it for Adrianople, one of the various gathering-places of the Spanish exiles. Here he remained for some years, serving as head of the Talmudic college. It was here that he began the composition of his "Beth Joseph" or "House of Joseph," on which he was to labor over twenty years.

Joseph Caro.

But it was to Palestine that the more spiritual-minded among the Spanish refugees found their way. Like Judah Halevi, they looked with longing to the Holy Land, although it was in Safed rather than in Jerusalem that they found a community wholly to their liking. Accordingly it was not long before Caro went to Safed, and it was there that he remained until his death.

Safed, the City of the Pious.

Safed is a small city, situated on a hill in the mountainous country of Upper Galilee. Caro wrote of it: "After nearly fifteen hundred years of living in exile and persecution, He remembered unto His people His covenant with their fathers, and brought them back from their captivity, one of a city and two of a family, from the corners of the earth to the land of glory, and they settled in the city of Safed, the desire of all lands."

At Safed it was not long before Caro was recognized as the greatest authority upon the Law of his time. All his contemporaries deferred to him. Students thronged to his academy. The great scholars of Safed all did him honor. His reputation became greater than that of almost any other rabbi since Maimonides. When he died, in 1575, the mourning was general. The works he left are among the masterpieces of rabbinical literature.

A Teacher in Israel.

One of these works attained the high honor of being accepted as the standard authority according to which Jews all over the world regulated every detail of their daily lives. For Joseph Caro found that the time had again come when it was necessary to go over once more the treasures of the traditional law, to arrange them in what might be their final form. You will remember that there had grown up in the life of the Jewish people, as indeed there grows up in the life of every people, a living commentary on its Law, its Torah. It had developed

Codes and Codifiers: the Talmud.

in all the Jewish ways and customs, made dear and familiar by association with parents, hallowed by the sanction of teachers. It was part of the very being of the Jew. But a time came when Israel was no longer one community, living the same life; there were Jewish congregations in many places besides Palestine. There was danger that, away from the homeland, amid people of habits other than theirs, the Jews would forget the customs of their fathers. Then, too, by this time the traditions had grown to proportions so great that the memory of man could scarcely hold them all. The spiritual heritage was threatened, and to save it, it came to be written down. Great leaders of thought like Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Meir were untiring in their efforts to arrange in a convenient order the vast material of the traditional law. Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi finished the great work, and the scattered people had the Mishnah to guide them in all their ways. The written Mishnah was in turn explained. Scholar followed scholar, the Amoraim took the place of the Tannaim. New problems arose and were solved, new ideas were added. Then Rabina and Rabbi Ashi drew together the material added through many generations of new life, and the Talmud came to be.

The Talmud had to be guarded, had to be preserved in its best form. This the Saboraim did, and they handed their work on in good order to the Gaonim. To them the people turned for their conceptions of the traditional literature, and they studied the Talmud and communicated their interpretations to the people. A great Responsa literature grew up. Every new generation brought new adaptations of the old laws; every new condition added to the number of commentaries. The wealth of material again became bewildering. Just as it had been necessary to write down the Oral Law, so it now became necessary to systematize all the commentaries upon it. The Law had to be codified so that any Jew might find the one

The "Mishneh Torah."

decision for which he was searching, without going through all the many, many books. It was Maimonides who accomplished this task. His "Mishneh Torah" contained the whole Oral Law,—all the traditions, all the explanations of the Gaonim and the other great teachers, from the conclusion of the Talmud to his own time. It was a brilliant piece of systematization.

But meanwhile, in France and Germany, Rashi and his school were interpreting the Talmud, continually adding new material. All this had to be classified, and accordingly more codes appeared. Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg gave his attention to codification, but very little of this part of his work has come down to us. From his school, however, sprang Rabbi Asher ben Jechiel, who tried to bring together all the material that had accumulated since the "Mishneh Torah." He, however, did not attempt a codification. The man who did this was a son of Rabbi Asher, Rabbi Jacob. Rabbi Jacob ben Asher, who was born in 1280 and died in 1340, divided his code into four parts, which he called the "Four Rows," "Arba Turim." Later the code came to be called in short "Turim" or "Tur." And the "Tur" soon became the standard practical code of law.

The "Arba Turim."

The "Tur," however, still left room for doubt. Two hundred years had passed since its completion, and new questions were arising which demanded new answers. A new sifting of material and a new summing-up became necessary. This task Joseph Caro took upon himself. His "Schulchan Aruch" or "Prepared Table" is the last of the great codes.

The "Schulchan Aruch."

For an undertaking like this, Caro had prepared himself by writing first a commentary on the "Tur," "Beth Joseph" or "House of Joseph," a scholarly work that marked him as one of the greatest Talmudists of all time. The "Beth Joseph" is a colossal compilation, comprising four volumes,

and covering the entire range of Talmudical and rabbinical literature. No other work of its kind can compare with it in wealth of material. Caro sums up and discusses no fewer than thirty-two authorities, beginning with the Talmud. His equipment for this gigantic work was his unsurpassed learning, his acquaintance with the Law in all its branches, his methodical mind, and an independence of thought, which, notwithstanding his great respect for ancient authorities, prevented him from accepting their opinions blindly. But the "Beth Joseph" was rather a commentary than a code; and Caro, therefore, in his old age, wrote his "Schulchan Aruch."

The "Beth Joseph," a Preparation for the "Schulchan Aruch."

This, his main work, became *the* code for all Jews who live according to the rabbinical law. In it they found a full and complete statement of the laws governing all their actions from rising in the morning to lying down at night, from the cradle to the grave. Their prayers, the directions for their observance of Sabbath and festival,—all were here. Dietary laws, laws of property, marriage and divorce laws, laws of mourning and of burial,—all were included. No phase of human life was omitted. A man was told how he should wash and eat and dress. He was given the proper method of slaughtering animals for food, of distinguishing between what was fit for use and what was not. Many of these laws anticipate modern methods of safeguarding health, so that through his obedience to the precepts of his religion the Jew was protected from many ills. His manners, too, were regulated—in fact, all his manifold relations with his fellowmen. Laws of charity were, of course, many and minute: the poor were well cared for. Business was regulated: absolute integrity was demanded of the Jew in his dealings with every one, with non-Jew as with Jew.

The "Schulchan Aruch," a Complete Code of Law.

The "Schulchan Aruch" was intended to be a lawbook,

a handy manual, a concise and convenient statement of the Halachah. But, like all the codes that came before it, it is illumined with the noble ethical and religious teaching that is the spirit of the Halachah. Its very first sentence is, "Let a man be strong as a lion to rise in the morning for the service of his Maker." This, an echo of an ethical teaching from the "Sayings of the Fathers", "Be as swift as a gazelle and as strong as a lion to do the will of thy Father in Heaven", becomes in the "Schulchan Aruch" the Law of Rising in the Morning. The Jewish genius takes an ethical injunction and makes of it a law of conduct. Is there, in all the world, another code of law that begins so nobly, that so unerringly indicates the "fountain light of all our day", "the master light of all our seeing"? Throughout his "Schulchan Aruch" the Jew saw in all the laws just so many opportunities to carry out in minute detail the will of his Father in Heaven.

Its Ethical and Religious Teaching.

To-day the Jew who rules his life by the code still goes to his rabbi to inquire concerning the ruling in the particular problem which puzzles him. The rabbi consults the "Schulchan Aruch" and the commentaries which have been written upon it, and communicates the decision to the anxious seeker after guidance. In serious and very complicated cases the rabbi may not be satisfied with his own interpretation. He will then consult his colleagues, and the final judgment will be that of the greatest living scholar. Since the time of the formulation of the "Schulchan Aruch" this interpretation has not ceased. New conditions continue to bring new problems, and the "Schulchan Aruch" must be made to apply to the questions of the new day. But a new code there has not been, nor has there been another codifier.

The "Schulchan Aruch" To-day: Among Jews who Obey the Rabbinical Code.

To the Jews of the sixteenth century the "Schulchan Aruch" was an absolute necessity. The laws it formulated were the only laws to which they could appeal. From the

standpoint of the law of the countries in which they lived they were homeless outcasts, with no rights that the law would recognize. Accordingly they themselves, as a community, had to keep the law for themselves, according to their own code. We shall see, however, in almost all the countries of the world, in time a tardy justice done the Jew. We shall see him, almost everywhere, considered no longer an alien in the land to which he gives his allegiance, but a citizen, having the rights, as he has the duties, of his neighbor who is of the faith of the majority. The Jew, therefore, as citizen of the land, obeys the law of the land. And many Jews consider that they have no further need of the "Schulchan Aruch."

Among Jews who no Longer Consider the "Schulchan Aruch" Necessary.

But there was another and a more interesting side to the character of Joseph Caro. The opening sentence of his code shows us that the great lawyer and codifier was a man of extreme piety and profound religious feeling. And because his mind dwelt on the study of the Mishnah, because he was passionately devoted to its teachings, it became for him a living reality, a mentor, a guardian angel. In the depths of the night, after he had labored long over the Mishnah, he would think that he heard its voice, like the voice of a mother, directing and guiding him in all the affairs of life.

The Great Lawyer also a Mystic.

The recollection of all that the Angel revealed to him he would write down in a sort of mystical diary which records the spiritual experience of a long life. The Angel was very exacting in its demands. "I am the mother that chastises her children", it proclaimed. "Be strong and cleave unto me." It laid upon him injunctions to lead an ascetic life. It bade him fast frequently and never fully satisfy his desire for food and drink, even in the first meal after a day of fasting. It warned him against too much sleep. One time, after the

His Mentor Angel.

marriage banquet of one of his daughters, Caro slept until just one hour after the breaking of dawn; for this slothful behavior the Angel reproved him. It instructed him never to speak an idle word; to be exceedingly lowly in spirit; never to be betrayed into anger. It reminded him of the necessity of reading devotional books, especially Bachya's "Duties of the Heart." And it particularly urged him to devote himself more diligently to the study of the Cabala, the lore of mysticism.

In the promises of the Angel all the aspirations of Caro's devout heart found expression. As a scholar, he was ambitious to spread the knowledge of the Torah: his Angel promised him that he would be worthy to preside over the greatest gathering of disciples in Israel. As a mystic, he longed for communion in the world to come with the souls of departed saints whose interpreter he was in this world: his Angel promised him a future of such glory. He yearned to settle in the Holy Land: his Angel promised to help him realize that wish. It was the Angel that urged him to leave Nicopolis for the Holy Land. Above all, he cherished the aspiration to die the death of a martyr. The Angel said, "Behold I have singled thee out to be a burnt-offering, to be consumed in fire for the sake of the sanctification of the Name." But just as there was no blemish in the offering the pious worshipper brought to the Temple altar to the service of his God, so there must be no slightest imperfection in the life which the martyr lays down. And the Angel accordingly added: "Thou knowest that in the burnt-offering no blemish may be found, not even in thought. Hence, take care that all thy thoughts are absorbed in the Torah." The voice of the Angel was thus always an inspiration to Caro to walk in the path of perfect piety.

So he lived and so he died, student of the Law and dreamer of dreams. His mind, logical and methodical, he devoted to the Halachah, but his heart and his soul he gave

to the Cabala. He wrote the last code of rabbinical Judaism; he recorded the spiritual experiences—the yearnings and the visions—of a mystic.

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XX.

ISAAC LURIA.

Safed reached its greatest glory in Isaac ben Solomon Luria. He was born in Jerusalem in 1534, the descendant of a famous German family, which had been driven from its native land, like many others, by the cruelty of persecution. The boy Isaac was a wonder-child. At the age of eight, he was considered a marvel of learning. About this time his father, Solomon, died; but the boy's education was continued by a wealthy uncle in Cairo, to whom the widow went with her son. The uncle adopted the boy as his own and placed him under the best Jewish scholars. Isaac was a diligent student, and it was not long before he became master of all rabbinical learning.

His Youth.

But Isaac Luria was one of those souls that can not be satisfied with the knowledge which comes through methodical reasoning and sober, logical thinking. They have a burning desire to solve all the riddles of the universe. They long for intimate personal knowledge of God. They are absorbed by a passion for fellowship with Him, for union with Him by the contact of spirit with spirit. This element of mysticism is present in all religions. In Judaism it goes back to a dim antiquity. It is as old as the oldest parts of the Bible. It flows on through the centuries, in varying degrees of intensity. It colors the religious literature of the Jew of the Middle Ages, his ritual, his worship. The philosopher tries to solve the

His Mysticism

problems that beset him by an effort of the intellect, but the mystic follows the guidance of his heart and soul. These tell him that it is not impossible for mortal man to enter into the divine mysteries. Let him but gain possession of all religious knowledge—let him observe scrupulously all the commandments of the Law—let him lead a life of stainless purity and holiness—then, by prayer and fasting, let him free himself from all consciousness of the outer world—and he will enter into a state of ecstacy in which he will see heavenly visions and learn the solution of all that had perplexed him. The state of mind for which he strove is not unlike the mood called up by Wordsworth:

> "That blessed mood,
> In which the burthen of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world,
> Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
> In which the affections gently lead us on,—
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things."

Its Defects and its Merits.

These broodings of the mystics sometimes led them into imaginings that seem unlovely, even repulsive, to minds and hearts less passionate than theirs. They were sometimes beguiled into beliefs that seem curious, perhaps childish. They tried to pierce the veil that covered the secrets of the place and time of the future redemption; they devised modes of calculating the years with a view to ascertaining the time of the Messianic kingdom. They believed in the magic power of the Ineffable Name of God. They attempted to read in the stars the secrets of destiny. They accepted the doctrine of the transmigration

of souls. But it is a one-sided and incomplete estimate of mysticism that seizes upon these elements and leaves out of account its true poetry, its spirituality, its sublimity.

Jewish mysticism tried to solve all the problems of life. It brooded on God, the world, creation, man, revelation, sin, atonement, the Messiah. How was it possible, for example, that God, the All-holy, the All-perfect, could come in contact with the imperfect world? The mystic tried to bridge this chasm between a pure God and an impure world. Another thought on which the mystic mused was the Fatherhood of God. In that relationship he found a promise of the communion he aspired to with One who, awe-inspiring in His power and majesty, was at the same time tender and full of compassion and mercy.

This was the mystic doctrine in which Isaac Luria became interested, and he abandoned himself to its study. It receives the name Cabala, which means literally "the received or traditional lore", because each doctrine was thought of in terms of its antiquity, to be traced back to the Prophets or to Moses at Sinai. It had had its charm for the scholarly mind and warm heart of Nachmanides. It had held out hope of comfort to Isaac Abravanel in the bitterness and despair of exile. It had its powerful appeal for Joseph Caro. And now it found in Isaac Luria its chief interpreter.

Cabala.

The main object of his study was the "Zohar." This was the text-book of Jewish mediaeval mysticism. Its title came from the third verse of the twelfth chapter of the Book of Daniel, a favorite book of the mystics: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament." In form the "Zohar" is a commentary on the Pentateuch. Indeed, in a way all Jewish mysticism is an attempt to pierce through the wording of the Bible to its truest, its most intimate meaning. The "Zohar" tries to teach that man, having the privilege of beholding

The Zohar.

everywhere the Divine image—the whole world being an embodiment of God—can, if he will, make his way to the invisible Author.

To understand these hidden mysteries, Luria withdrew from the distractions of the world. On the banks of the Nile he built himself a shelter, and here he lived an ascetic, secluded life, given up to fasting and praying. Thus he lived for seven years. He returned to his family in the city only for the Sabbath, even then speaking but rarely. By reason of this complete absorption in meditation upon the holy mysteries, he believed that he at last reached the degree of being worthy of communion with the prophet Elijah, who initiated him into the sublime doctrines. He believed that every night his soul, freed from all earthly fetters, ascended to heaven and conversed with the great teachers of the past.

The Asceticism of Luria.

In obedience to what he believed was a command from Heaven, he left Egypt and went to Palestine, where, after a short sojourn in Jerusalem, he settled in Safed. There he found "men of wisdom and understanding", among them Joseph Caro. And there, in that city of great scholars and great mystics, his personality gave him an overwhelming influence. The people called him "the holy man" and "the Divine Cabalist." The great Talmudists and mystics accepted him, first as a colleague, later as a master.

In Safed.

In Safed he taught the "Zohar", imparting its doctrines to his disciples after they had made the proper preparation for such high and holy instruction. For the mystic doctrine was not to be communicated lightly. To novices Luria expounded only elementary Cabala, and even to the small circle of his trusted pupils he was reticent about the most secret mysteries. Nor could his disciples ever prevail upon him to put his teachings into a book for the benefit of posterity.

A Teacher of Cabala.

The natural accompaniment to this "high thinking" was "plain living." And Luria led a very simple life, dressing very plainly and spending very little on himself. He was scrupulous in the fulfilment of the command to pay the workman on the very day on which he has performed his task. He was, of course, very charitable.

"Plain Living and High Thinking."

Anger he declared to be the source of all evil. No man should be betrayed into anger against either Gentile or Jew, not even when he has been robbed or insulted. The mind should always remain calm. Love was one of the conditions which he prescribed for perfect holiness, "love of all creatures, including non-Jews." Luria himself was careful not to kill any living creature, not even a worm. This may have been a result of his belief in the transmigration of souls, which peopled the lower forms of creation with the souls of the wicked.

Love a Condition for Perfect Holiness.

Prayer was to Luria one of the main functions of life. According to him there is no prayer in which man, by reason of close communion with God, does not become the receptacle of new Divine light and a new outflow of Divine mercy. For him every word of the prescribed prayers, every syllable, every letter, had, besides its literal meaning, its mystical significance.

Prayer One of the Main Functions of Life.

In this way Luria, in common with other mystics, gave a spiritual meaning to every act of the whole life of man. Just as the Talmudist found nothing in the range of human affairs that was outside the province of the Torah, so the Cabalist found nothing that could not be spiritualized. For the Jew of that time, Caro with his legal code was the authority; Luria with his mystic holiness was the model.

A Spiritualization of Life.

Luria died in 1572. His favorite disciple, Chaim Vital,

collected notes of his lectures and produced numerous works claiming the authority of Luria's teaching. His influence was marked, too, in the devotional works which echoed his austere nature and made exacting demands upon the religious capabilities of man.

Luria's Influence.

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XXI.

SABBATAI ZEVI AND OTHER FALSE MESSIAHS.

There was another note emphasized in the mystic doctrine which dominated the heart and soul of Isaac Luria.

The Hope for a Messiah.

One of the themes on which the "Zohar" repeatedly dwells is the coming of the Messiah. This was the hope that, throughout all the long centuries of persecution, strengthened the Jews in their faith. This lightened the gloom and made the darkness a promise of the dawn. The greater their misery, the stronger became their confidence that the reign of injustice must end and God's kingdom be established on earth. They turned to their Bible and drew consolation from the pictures of the future that they found there. In the earlier prophets they read of a happy, prosperous Israel returned to its homeland, reunited under a glorious descendant of the house of David. Later prophets inspired them with visions of a world at peace, the nations beating "their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks," and flowing to Zion to learn of God's ways.

Isaiah of the Exile brought them his message of loving comfort and taught them to see in their sorrows only the means of purification, so that they might become worthy of their mission—to be a light to the Gentiles and a blessing to the world, the Suffering Servant through whom the salvation of the world should come. And in Jeremiah

they found the lofty conception of a mankind grown perfect in the knowledge of the Lord and in the love and practise of good: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. . . . I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. . . . And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

The Longing for the Messiah.

But there were times of darkness and misery so profound that the gleam of a far-distant future, however sublime, could not pierce the clouds. The tortured people, desperate in their suffering, cried out for a nearer, warmer, more human hope. In their grief and bewilderment, they turned from the prophets of large, clear vision to the mystics and the dreamers. They had suffered so much and so long; surely redemption must be at hand; surely God would come quickly to save His people. In Palestine, when the yoke of the Romans had seemed too heavy to bear, the Jews had longed for a Deliverer. Men who aspired to be the saviours of their people had headed desperate outbursts against Rome, had failed, had been crucified as rebels, and forgotten. Still in their dire need the people had hoped for a Redeemer, a Messiah. In those days, Jesus of Nazareth had announced himself as the Expected One. But the Jews as a whole had not believed in him, had rejected him. Their Messiah was to usher in an age of peace: Jesus left a world drenched in blood. His followers had come to identify him with God, a doctrine unthinkable to Judaism; and so what had begun as a Messianic movement within Judaism, had broken off and had become a new religion. Later, again under Roman oppression, the hope for redemption had led some Jews to hail Bar Cochba as Messiah. But the light of the "Son of

a Star" had been quenched in darkness. And still the afflicted people hoped on.

Sometimes their hope clung pathetically to one wholly unworthy of it. Such a one was the Kurdistan adventurer, David Alroy, who lived about 1160. Alroy, taking advantage of the condition of unrest which the Crusades had caused in the East, raised the banner of revolt against the Sultan, and called upon the oppressed people of Israel to acknowledge him as their Messiah and under his leadership to throw off the Moslem yoke. He promised that he would lead them triumphantly into the Holy City, where he would be their King and they would live in freedom forever. Many were convinced of the truth of his pretensions. Many joined him in an attack upon the citadel of his native city in Kurdistan. What followed we do not definitely know. Every old record tells a different story. It is probable that the attack failed and that Alroy was put to death. The old legends that gathered about this picturesque personality are, however, full of interest. They represent the adventurer as a wizard, intimately versed in magic arts. Through his magic he escaped from the dungeon into which he had been cast by the Sultan. Audaciously he made his appearance in the very presence of the Sultan and his councilors; but when they attempted to seize him, he made himself invisible and again escaped. Following his voice, the Sultan and his nobles found themselves halted at the banks of a river, there to see the bold rebel, who had now made himself visible, miraculously crossing the water on a shawl, and escaping from their grasp. On the same day he returned to his native town, accomplishing in one day a journey which took common men, not endowed with magic power, ten days. Now the Sultan threatened to put to the sword all the Jews of his dominion if Alroy were not surrendered to him. Seriously alarmed, the Jewish authorities pleaded with Alroy to abandon his pretensions. He,

David Alroy.

however, was obdurate; and at last the Mohammedan governor took the matter into his own hands and ordered Alroy's father-in-law to put an end to him while he slept. This is the end of the legends, but it is not the end of Alroy's influence. Even his death did not wholly destroy the belief of his deluded followers in their sorry hero. Lord Beaconsfield, in his novel, "The Wondrous Tale of Alroy," has thrown about this impostor a romantic glamour which keeps alive the interest in the Kurdistan pretender.

As time went on, there grew up about the hope for the future a host of mystical legends that helped to keep the people who believed in them in a world of dreams.

The Spell of the Mystic Promise.

These Cabalistic doctrines exercised a fascination on even so clear and practical a thinker as Don Isaac Abravanel, who, to comfort the Spanish exiles in their appalling misery, emphasized the speedy coming of the Messiah; and Manasseh ben Israel, a man of unusual culture, devoted himself with zeal to the furthering of the Messianic hope. Christians as well as Jews felt the spell of the mystic promise; so that Manasseh did not hesitate to urge, in his letter to the English Parliament, that the readmission of the Jews into England would hasten the Messianic era.

Visionaries.

Everywhere visionaries appeared. In Portugal, a Marano maiden, fifteen years of age, had visions in which the Messiah revealed himself to her and promised to come soon to redeem the Jews. Encouraged by her prophecy, unfortunate Maranos threw off their pretended Christianity and proclaimed themselves as Jews. The deluded girl and her followers were burnt at the stake. From the far East came David Reubeni with a message to the Christian rulers of Europe, to obtain arms to wrest Palestine from the Moslems' grasp. The Jews were profoundly impressed when they saw him received graciously by Pope Clement VII and entertained royally by the King of Portu-

gal. Diogo Pires, a New Christian, handsome, talented, of high position, returned to the faith of his fathers, and, under the name of Solomon Molcho, preached Messianic ideas until he gave up his life in the fires of the Inquisition. It was this enthusiast who filled Joseph Caro with the longing to be "consumed on the altar as a holy burnt-offering", to sanctify the name of God by a martyr's death.

And still Israel dreamed of a near deliverance. "The Kingdom of God is at hand," the Cabalists insisted. In Turkey there was a youth to heed this cry. Sabbatai Zevi was born in Smyrna in 1626. From childhood he was a solitary and saintly boy. His favorite study was the Cabala. Its mysteries he pondered day and night. Prayer and self-discipline were his pleasures. He lived a life apart, secluded and ascetic. On winter midnights he would plunge into the icy waters of the harbor. Day after day he would fast. And while he afflicted his body, his mind was in a state of constant religious meditation and spiritual ecstasy. This wonderful youth the Jews of Smyrna regarded with wistful hope. A reverent band of followers gathered about him, and to them he would speak of the mysteries of the Cabala and the glories of the Kingdom to come. He dominated them with the asceticism of his life, the noble spiritual beauty of his face, the majesty of his tall figure, and the solemn music of his voice.

Sabbatai Zevi.

To Sabbatai, poring over the promises of the Zohar, came rumors that Christians, too, were expecting the speedy coming of the Kingdom. His father was the agent of an English house, and from him Sabbatai heard of the Puritan hope of a Messiah of the Jews. What—Sabbatai must have thought—what if he himself were the Expected One? What if he were the Messiah designated by God to restore Israel to freedom and glory?

In 1648, Sabbatai, then in his twenty-third year, announced himself to his disciples as the long hoped for Mes-

He Proclaims Himself the Messiah.

siah. He did this by uttering the dread Name of God, the Four-Letter Name forbidden by the reverent usage of centuries. According to Cabalistic interpretation, this was an act of mystic importance: it signified that the Messianic era had begun.

Sabbatai had many devoted adherents, but those who believed in him were outnumbered by those who did not.

He is Banished.

When news of his daring pronunciation of the Ineffable Name came to the ears of the rabbis of Smyrna, they laid the ban upon him and his disciples. After further disagreement and disorder, the authorities banished Sabbatai from Smyrna.

He wandered through the Orient, everywhere gaining new followers, everywhere encountering lessening opposition.

He Gains Followers.

His kingly presence, his persuasive voice, his fasting and praying won him adherents. Constantinople acclaimed him; so did Salonica, where he gained a great following, but where his mystic rites so shocked the rabbis that they banished him from the city. He went to Jerusalem, hoping, perhaps, that in the sacred city a miracle would take place to confirm him as the Messiah. And ever the circle that gathered about him increased in numbers and in warmth of devotion.

And now a strangely beautiful Jewish girl escaped from a nunnery in Poland. She had been taken there as a little

The Bride of the Messiah.

child in the terrible days of the Cossack massacres, leaving her parents dead in the blood-stained streets. In a dream she had heard her martyred father proclaim her the bride of the Messiah who was soon to appear, and she wandered through the world in quest of her great destiny. When Sabbatai heard of her, he sent for her, and they were wedded. Her queenly beauty gained for him thousands of new followers.

At last, in the great synagogue in Smyrna, to the sound of the blowing of the ram's horn, Sabbatai publicly announced

A World Gone Mad.

himself as the Messiah. The frenzied multitude cried in their joy, "The Kingdom has come! Blessed is the Messiah!" The news spread through the world. All Turkey, Italy, Germany, Holland, distant England heard of it. Not only the ignorant masses, but even men of culture and judgment—rabbis, leaders in the community—saw in Sabbatai the fulfillment of their hope. Christians, too, believed in him as the Messiah of the Jews. Everywhere men and women prepared themselves for the Kingdom, fasting for days upon days; lashing their bodies in an agony of self-mortification; plunging, like Sabbatai, into the purifying waters of the winter sea; rolling themselves naked in the snow. Business was at an end. Jewish merchants sold out their wares for a song. Every one made ready for the return to Jerusalem. Those who dared to doubt that Sabbatai was the Messiah were almost torn to pieces by the hysterical mob. And besides self-discipline, alms-giving, and prophetic ecstasy, there was a dark undercurrent of immorality, because of the mystical doctrine that in the time of grace the Law would be transcended. Now that this time had come, the rules and regulations of the Torah were no longer binding. Fast days were transformed into days of rejoicing, for now that the Messiah had come, lamentations must be changed into songs of joy.

Sabbatai now confidently set out for Constantinople, where, according to the prophecy of one of his disciples, the crown was to be taken from the Sultan's head and placed upon his own. On his arrival, however, officers of the Sultan met him and put him under arrest. Instead of arriving in Constantinople in pomp and princely splendor, he came in chains and was housed in a prison. But whether as triumphant King or as Suffering Servant, he was still the Messiah to his ardent adherents. About him was still the atmosphere of the mysterious and the supernatural. Even the Moslems were im-

The Messiah in Prison.

pressed, and Sabbatai won a large Turkish following. His dungeon became a throne-room. The story of the homage paid him by Mohammedans as well as Jews spread abroad. In the castle at Abydos, to which the distinguished prisoner was transferred, he held royal court. The world heard and wondered.

A Test for the Messiah.

The Sultan, usually quick to slay, was in a quandary. To put an end to Sabbatai's pretensions by killing him would be dangerous. He would fall as a martyr, beloved by Jew and Turk, and his death would mark the rise of a new and troublesome sect. No, the Messiah must be robbed of his glamour. Accordingly the Sultan demanded of Sabbatai a miracle. Stripped naked, he must present himself as a mark for the archers; then, if he were proof against their arrows, he would indeed be recognized as the Messiah. But if he refused this miracle, a self-confessed impostor, he should die a shameful death by torture, scourged through the streets with burning torches. He could save his life only by becoming a Mohammedan.

Sabbatai Fails to Meet the Test.

What a struggle must have raged in Sabbatai's soul! Was he Messiah or was he mortal? Should he become Turk or martyr? He found in himself neither the faith to face the arrows, confident in his divinity, nor the nobility to go forth bravely as a martyr to a painful death. He cast off his Jewish garb and placed upon his head the Turkish turban. For ten years he vacillated miserably, a Turk among Turks, suspected of being a Jew among Jews, until, in 1676, he died, a lonely exile in a little Albanian town.

The Effect of his Apostasy.

When the rumor of his apostasy spread through the world, the delirious rapture of those who had believed in him was succeeded by the most bitter shame. Men were prostrated by the terrible shock. Many, however, desperate at the thought of losing the

great hope that had lightened the night of their exile, still clung to Sabbatai. They persuaded themselves that his conversion must be part of the Messianic scheme. And so, even after their leader had miserably failed them, the dreamers in Israel dreamed on. Many more, utterly disillusioned and disheartened, their faith shaken beyond recovery, turned, like Sabbatai himself, to Mohammedanism and were lost to Judaism.

Impostors and Fanatics.

Nor did the wretched ending of Sabbatai's pretensions prevent others from proclaiming themselves as the Expected One. Some of them were sordid impostors, who, for their own gain, wilfully deluded the people with a hope that they knew to be false. Others, dazzled by constant communion with the mysteries and ecstacies of Cabalistic literature, actually believed in their divine mission. A sorry line of impostors and fanatics followed Sabbatai. The last of them was an unscrupulous adventurer who wrought much mischief. This was Jacob Frank, of Galicia, who taught the dangerous doctrine that all the Messiahs who had risen had been true Messiahs. Jesus, Mohammed, Sabbatai Zevi—all of them in turn had possessed the soul of the Messiah, which was now incarnate in Frank himself. Frank eventually renounced all the laws of Judaism and went over to the Catholic Church, taking with him thousands of his followers. Indeed, it is a significant fact that these Messianic movements led always away from Judaism; that they all ended, not in increased devotion to the faith, but in falling away from it.

The Larger Vision.

But neither shabby trickster nor self-deluded mystic could besmirch the beautiful ideal, the noble aspiration towards salvation and perfection. That was the essential hope—the belief in the perfectibility of the human race. That was the larger vision—Isaiah's, Jeremiah's picture of a world at peace, an age of universal righteousness and justice, when all men shall recognize that

God is One and His Name is One. Different centuries interpret it differently. In times of kings and princes, the image of a gracious Prince of Peace seems inseparably connected with the ideal. He is the figure that will lead the world to regeneration and salvation. In days of ever-widening democracy, the conception changes from an ideal person to an ideal commonwealth, with perfect conditions for the perfect life, with social justice, with world-wide brotherhood. To this end the world strives. And to this end Israel is undyingly true to its God-given mission, to be God's messenger and witness: "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." This is the hope of Israel. There may be many differences of belief, but they are only in the details; the essential all agree upon—the hope, unshaken through the centuries, that God's day will dawn, that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

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XXII.

MANASSEH BEN ISRAEL.

In spite of the exile of the Jews from Spain, there were still left in the land Maranos, many of whom hid a secret but ardent Judaism under the mask of Catholicism. But these Maranos, even those great in wealth and high in position, found themselves in a very evil plight. The fires of the Inquisition had not died with Torquemada; under Philip II, the gloomy fanatic who married Queen Mary of England, they flamed up again, and all the worst horrors of the Inquisition were revived. The Maranos felt that their only safety lay in flight. But where could they flee? Turkey seemed very distant and strange to them; England and France were still barred to them; Germany was cruel; in Italy the Popes were hostile. There was only brave little Holland, where the sturdy Protestants had, in a heroic war, thrown off the intolerable yoke of Spain, and gained for themselves national and religious independence. The Dutch, who had gained this priceless boon for themselves, were not unwilling to share it with others. William of Orange, the father and founder of the Dutch republic (the Dutch kingdom of today), devoted his days and nights, sacrificed his princely fortune, and risked his life for the establishment of the great principle of toleration in matters of conscience. In an age of the greatest bigotry he conceived the thought of religious freedom, and under his guidance Holland became the home of that liberty

Brave Little Holland.

of conscience which is the grandest proof of the progress of the human race.

A New Jerusalem.

In Holland the fugitives from Spain and Portugal were warmly and generously received. The Dutch welcomed them and made friends of them. And the Jews, on their part, were such immigrants as any country might well be proud to gain. They brought many advantages to the Netherlands. They brought their great wealth and their trade with the Indies. And they were not traders and financiers only—these wanderers to whom the Dutch opened their doors; they were scholars with the culture of centuries, physicians skilled in healing, and statesmen wise and loyal. In the free air of the Netherlands they eagerly threw off the disguise of Christianity and hastened to establish themselves as open and declared Jews. They lost no time in building a synagogue, and in founding schools and charitable institutions. In the land of dikes and windmills they applied themselves to their Jewish learning, as they had in so many ages and in so many different parts of the world,—in Jerusalem and in Jamnia, in Sura and in Cordova. Amsterdam, with its happy, honored, and rapidly increasing Jewish community, came to be called the New Jerusalem.

Refugees from Germany and Poland.

From other European lands also the downtrodden Jews turned to Holland as to the Promised Land. Hither fled the cruelly oppressed Jews of Germany and, during the fearful Cossack persecutions of 1648, many Jews from Poland. These refugees from Germany and Poland, however, were not polished aristocrats like the Spanish and Portuguese Jews. They were poor unfortunates who had for centuries been victims of the crowded ghetto and the searing badge of shame. They could not at once straighten the body that persecution had bent, or throw off the shackles that intolerance had fastened upon the mind. Because of their wide differences in manners and

customs, and because, too, of the different languages which they spoke, it was impossible that a very close bond should unite them with the Spanish Jews in Holland. Accordingly we find the Spanish and Portugese Jews keeping very much to themselves; indeed they stood aloof from their less cultured brethren more than we like to see. They worshipped in different synagogues with a different prayer-book and a different pronunciation of Hebrew, and they studied in separate schools.

Holland's Reward.

These Jewish fugitives, too, the Dutch received not grudgingly, but gladly. Thrifty and frugal themselves, they valued highly the industry and financial enterprise of the newcomers. Nor were they less appreciative of the ripe scholarship of the Jews from Spain. Holland was a land of scholars, and Dutch men of learning turned to the Jews for guidance in the study of Hebrew and in the interpretation of the Bible.

An Example to other Lands.

This blossoming out of the Netherlands in commerce and in culture after the Jews had settled there, was not unnoticed by other lands. Other countries saw and considered. The outcasts whom they had spurned from their borders were proving their importance in the economic and spiritual growth of the land that sheltered them. In consequence, many princes, among them the King of Denmark and the Dukes of Modena and Savoy, invited the Jews to settle in their domains. But there was still one shore upon which they might not set foot: since 1290 no Jew had entered England. To this island the Jews of Amsterdam looked with longing. Who would undertake to open a way for the Jews into England? The man who attempted this difficult task was Manasseh ben Israel.

Manasseh Ben Israel.

Manasseh's father had escaped from the dungeons of the Inquisition, and broken in health and ruined in fortune, had sought the peace that his countrymen enjoyed in Amsterdam. He did not long enjoy the quiet

Manasseh ben Israel—*Rembrandt.*

and freedom of Holland, for he soon died. Manasseh, the youngest of his family, early showed himself a boy of intelligence and promise. He applied himself zealously to study, and mastered not only Bible and Talmud, but also secular knowledge, especially languages. At eighteen he was already preacher in Amsterdam and teacher in the school. But these positions were not well paid, and they did not suffice to support the young scholar. Early in life he had married—his wife, by the way, was a great-granddaughter of Isaac Abravanel—and the responsibility of caring for a family compelled the youthful rabbi, like the sages of an earlier day, to labor with his hands. He set up a printing-press, the first Hebrew press in Holland. But even this enterprise did not provide sufficient money, and Manasseh began to think seriously of emigrating to Brazil on a trading venture. Fortunately, two wealthy and philanthropic members of his congregation showed their public spirit by coming forward at this crisis. They established a college and placed Mannasseh at the head of it with an adequate salary. Thus his needs were met, and he was able to devote himself to the work he found most congenial,—to his duties in the pulpit and in the school, and, above all, to his beloved books.

From his books Manasseh gained much. His learning was wide; it lacked depth, but it had range and variety. He contributed nothing original to the sum of human knowledge, but little that had been written by other men escaped him. He knew his Jewish literature, and with great ease and rapidity he wrote book after book on what he had acquired. The work which first drew to him the attention of the learned world shows his untiring industry and his wide reading. It was called "The Conciliator" ("El Conciliador"), and its object was to reconcile passages in the Bible which seemed to conflict with one another. It was written in Spanish, although Manasseh could have written it with equal fluency in Hebrew, Latin,

"The Conciliator."

Portuguese, or English; and it is computed to contain quotations from or references to over two hundred Hebrew, and fifty Latin and Greek authors.

Homage from Christian Europe.

Although Manasseh can not be considered an accurate or a thorough writer, his contemporaries, both Jews and Christians, looked with wonder and admiration upon his voluminous works. Writing with equal ease in any one of a half dozen languages, he presented Talmudic literature to Christian Europe so clearly, that through him Christian scholars became familiar with Jewish thought and Jewish points of view. The learning that he showed, and the winning friendliness and warmth of heart, gained him friends among the intellectual all over the world. So great was his reputation that every Christian scholar who traveled through Amsterdam sought him out and paid him homage. Some of the foremost people of his time exchanged letters with him. Rembrandt, the great Dutch painter, was his friend. Queen Christina of Sweden, the learned daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, rated him so highly that she would gladly have admitted his people into Sweden, had not the government forbidden it.

The Hope of the Messiah.

More than in any other topic, Manasseh was profoundly interested in all that had been written about the Messiah and the coming of the Messianic time. He lived in an age when, in all countries of Europe, there were dreamers, Christian as well as Jewish, who hoped for the speedy coming of the Kingdom of God. These mystical-minded enthusiasts studied the Bible assiduously for all the prophetic passages that related to the millenium, and every word that they found they interpreted literally. Accordingly they believed that before the Messiah could come, the lost Ten Tribes of Israel must first be found, in order that the union of Israel and Judah which the prophets had foretold might come to pass; nor could the Messiah appear

before the fulfillment of the prophecy that the Jews should be scattered from one end of the earth to the other.

Manasseh was eager to do his share towards hastening the coming of the Messiah. Together with the other visionaries of Europe, especially the Puritans of England, he set himself to solve the first problem. What had become of the lost Ten Tribes banished from Israel by the Assyrian conqueror, Shalmanassar? Manasseh felt that he was in a position to answer this question. Some years before, a Jewish traveler in South America had been led to believe, by his observations of the Indians, that among them existed the Israelitish tribes; and later experiences with the Indians confirmed in him this impression. Of the truth of this statement Manasseh was firmly convinced. To him, too, certain manners and customs of the Indians seemed to resemble those of the Jews. On this foundation he wrote a book entitled "Israel's Hope," in which he traced the course of the Ten Tribes to Tartary and China and thence to the American continent, thus disposing, to his own satisfaction, of the first obstacle to the Messianic age. In this book, also, he referred with deep feeling to another prophetic message, the warning of punishment to the Jews, and he showed how tragically this prophecy had been fulfilled. He pointed out the unspeakable cruelty that the Jews had suffered and still continued to suffer from the Inquisition because they would not forsake the Law revealed to their fathers. For it numberless martyrs had perished; for it men and women were still, with incredible heroism, giving up their lives in fiery torture. As these prophesied sufferings had been inflicted, so Manasseh drew the conclusion that the promised redemption would also come to pass.

The Lost Ten Tribes.

Manasseh now turned to the second problem that was troubling the mystics. If, before the Messiah could come, the Jews were first to be scattered to the ends of the earth,

then they must certainly with all speed be admitted into England, in the extreme north of the inhabited world. But for more than three hundred years no Jews had been allowed to enter England. Accordingly Manasseh bent all his energy towards securing for his people permission to settle in England. In 1650 he sent to the English Parliament his "Hope of Israel," accompanying it with a letter in which he requested that the Jews be no longer denied a home on English soil. In this letter he expressed his eagerness to travel to England and there in person to plead the cause of his people.

A Second Problem.

Manasseh did not send his treatise to England without being reasonably sure of the reception that it would receive. From Amsterdam he had carefully observed conditions in England, and they seemed very favorable to his cause. The Puritan party had, in 1648, come into power; and Oliver Cromwell and his army had won religious freedom. Would they be willing to extend it to the Jew? It did not seem improbable. It was to the great figures of the Hebrew Bible that Cromwell and his men turned for guidance and inspiration,—to the Judges who had freed an oppressed people, to the kings who had routed the enemies of their country. Cromwell compared himself to Gideon and to Judas Maccabeus. Now to revere the ancient heroes of Hebrew story, to live according to the word of Hebrew psalmist and prophet, and yet not to honor the people who were of the race and the faith that had given to the world all this greatness and glory was unthinkable. And indeed among the Puritans were many men who admired the "people of God." So far, in fact, did their liking for Jewish customs and Jewish thought go, that one writer wished the government to declare the Jewish Sabbath the English day of rest, and another suggested that the Torah be made the code of law of the commonwealth! A prominent Englishman, moreover, in a work

The Attitude towards the Jews in Puritan England.

dedicated to Parliament, declared that the suffering brought upon England by the civil war was a just punishment for English persecution of the Jews; that it was necessary to atone for this great sin by admitting the Jews and treating them as brothers; and that it was the duty of Englishmen to use every means to comfort the Jews, in order to obtain their forgiveness for the innocent Jewish blood that had been shed in England, and to unite Jews and Englishmen in friendship.

The Friendly Reception of Manasseh's Request.

These signs of the times Manasseh ben Israel had not misinterpreted. His request was favorably received by Parliament. Lord Middlesex sent him a letter of thanks addressed "To my dear brother, the Hebrew philosopher, Manasseh ben Israel." He was invited to appear before Parliament. Unfortunately, however, the war that broke out at that time between England and Holland interrupted peaceful communication between Amsterdam and London, and it was not until peace was again established that Manasseh was able to take up his project. Nor was he encouraged to go on with his plan until he had assured the Dutch government that the Jews of Amsterdam were not themselves contemplating going over to the foremost rival of the Netherlands, but that they rather sought in England a resting-place as pleasant as their own for the outcast and persecuted Jews of countries that were still cruelly intolerant. How gratifying it must have been to the Jews to realize that they were regarded as citizens so desirable that Holland would not willingly permit them to leave! Indeed, in those days it was a compliment as rare as it was agreeable.

The Friendly Reception of Manasseh Himself.

In London Manasseh was received in a most friendly fashion by the Lord Protector as the spokesman and representative of the whole Jewish race. In a stately audience he delivered his petition. He referred to history to prove that God had pun-

ished the monarchs that had troubled Israel,—Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, and others. On the other hand, the benefactors of the Jewish race had enjoyed happiness, so that the promise of God to Abraham had been literally fulfilled: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee." At the same time Manasseh spread through England a declaration in which he stated the case for the Jew with dignity and restraint. Justice, not favor, was what he asked for. He dwelt on the advantages in commerce that England would gain from the ability and industry of the Jews, pointing to the wholesale trade of the Jews of Holland in diamonds, dye-stuffs, wine, and oil to prove his assertion. Against the charge of lack of loyalty, so often repeated, so entirely without foundation, he defended his people by showing that Jeremiah's injunction: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it" had ever been followed by the Jews. He cited examples of the fidelity and loyalty of Jews in ancient and in modern times towards the countries that sheltered them. The charge of usury he met by maintaining that the Jews abhorred usury, and that if some Jews acted contrary to their rule which forbade the taking of usury, they did it "not as Jews, but as wicked Jews." The accusation of ritual murder he denied briefly and emphatically, reminding the Englishmen that similar charges had been made by pagans, in the early history of the Church, against the Christians themselves. And he denied that the Jews sought to convert Christians to Judaism, referring to the Jewish law to prove that it was their custom to dissuade rather than to attract converts.

Opposition.

This appeal, aided as it was by the appearance and character of the representative of the Jewish people, made a profound impression. Cromwell himself most earnestly wished to see the Jews admitted, and he spoke in their defense. Many voices, however, were

raised against them. Merchants feared Jewish rivalry. Clergymen, who could not rid themselves of their hatred of those whom they believed to be the crucifiers of their Savior, were most violent in their opposition. They easily roused to hostility a multitude that knew, not the real Jew, but the Jew as Shakespeare had drawn him in "The Merchant of Venice," miserly, vengeful, and bloodthirsty. To stir up fanatical excitement against the Jews, their enemies spread broadcast through England publications in which all the old false accusations were again raked up against them.

Meanwhile Manasseh waited. The decision of the question was delayed. For six anxious months he hoped for a favorable reply. He used his time in composing an answer to a letter in which a person of importance in the government set forth all the accusations against the Jews and asked Manasseh to refute them. Manasseh's response, his "Vindiciae Judaeorum" or "Defence of the Jews," which appeared in 1656, is the best known and probably the best work from his pen. He wrote it with deep feeling. He devoted most space to a deniai of the accusation that Jews at Passover use the blood of murdered Christian children. Then he denied the absurd statement that Jews practise idolatry with the scrolls of the Torah. In succeeding chapters he declared that Jews in their prayers do not curse Christians or mock other religions. He defended the Jews against the charge that they are not upright in business, asserting that their religion particularly demands the utmost rectitude. Not only among the Jews, but among all nations and all peoples are found some who do not obey the Law. And he concluded with an eloquent appeal to the people of England:

"The Defence of the Jews."

> "And to the highly honored nation of England I make my most humble request, that they would read over my arguments impartially, without prejudice and devoid of all passion, effectually recom-

> mending me to their grace and favor, and earnestly beseeching God that He would be pleased to hasten the time promised by Zephaniah, wherein we shall all serve Him with one consent, after the same manner, and shall be all of the same judgment; that as His name is one, so His fear may be also one, and that we may all see the goodness of the Lord (blessed forever!) and the consolations of Zion."

This last work of Manasseh ben Israel made a very favorable impression in England, but it did not accomplish its mission. Cromwell, amidst the increasing difficulties of his government, could not find time to effect the admission of the Jews. Parliament reached no formal decision. Manasseh was dismissed with honor, without, however, the comforting conviction that he had won his cause. On the journey home, in 1657, he died, probably broken down by his exertions and the disappointment of his hopes.

Apparent Failure.

Yet his work had not been in vain. In the very year of his death, the residence of Jews was permitted in London, not, indeed, triumphantly and with full process of law, but still practically. Before Manasseh had been dead ten years, in spite of the fact that the Parliamentary decision had not yet been rendered, there was a large Jewish community in London. These Jews followed their religion without hazard; they worshipped openly in their synagogue. And if they were not allowed all the rights of English citizens, they enjoyed a much greater freedom than their German brothers, and a security and peace that drew to them many Maranos from Portugal and Spain. And the passing years proved that England, like Holland, would be given no cause to regret that she had set her gates ajar, and allowed the Jews to come in.

Real Success.

It is not, therefore, principally for his many, many books that we remember Manasseh ben Israel with honor. He is

His Service to his People.

known now less as a writer of books, more as doer of deeds. Like Isaac Abravanel, he is famous today, not so much in the field of literature, as in the world of action. The Spanish Don did his utmost to prevent the banishment of his race from Spain, sacrificing wealth and position to cast his lot with his own people. The Dutch rabbi brought it about, even though indirectly and not in the way he hoped, that the Jews were admitted into the boundless opportunities of free England, there to achieve a career full of honor for their country and for their religion.

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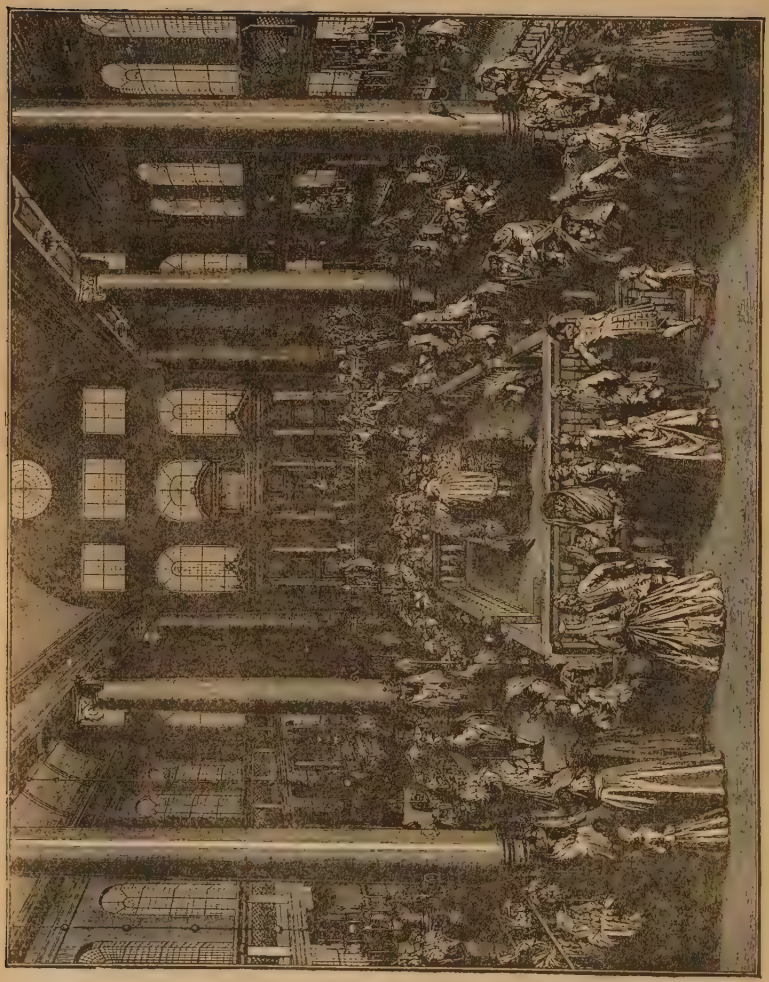

Interior Sephardic Synagogue at Amsterdam—*Picart.*

XXIII.

URIEL DA COSTA AND BARUCH SPINOZA.

But while the Jews of Holland were enjoying the new-found happiness of following their religion openly and without restraint, flames from the funeral piles of martyred Jews still reddened the skies of Spain and Portugal. Secret Jews, lacking the supreme courage to mount the faggots and die the terrible death by fire, had yet sufficient fortitude and devotion to the faith of their fathers to forfeit their position and their wealth and to risk their life in a dangerous flight to Holland, where they could throw off the hateful disguise of enforced Christianity and live as Jews before the world.

In Spain and Portugal.

Gabriel da Costa was a brilliant young Portuguese cavalier, whose soul could not find comfort in the ceremonies of the Catholic Church. To find an answer to his doubts and his questionings, he went back to the Testament revered by both Jew and Christian. He read the Prophets; and their sublime teachings, their constant striving after justice and righteousness, inspired him. He turned to the Law of Moses, and he was touched by its tender care for the poor and the stranger. And this people—he remembered with sudden enthusiasm—this people that had "statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law," was his own race! His ancestors had prayed in synagogues in the days before the terrors of the Inquisition had made of them good Christians. He was no coward,

Gabriel da Costa.

he told himself. He would not live a daily lie, professing Christianity with his lips, but longing for Judaism in his heart. He would abjure Catholicism and become a Jew. He would leave Portugal and flee to Holland where faith was free. To this plan he won over his mother and his brothers, and together they left friends, station in society, homeland. The sunny blue sky and the pleasant hills of Portugal spoke of many tender associations, but the call of conscience was stronger.

In Amsterdam, Da Costa changed his baptismal name of Gabriel to the Hebrew Uriel. With enthusiasm he went to the Portuguese synagogue to worship with his brethren, happy indeed to be in a city where the music of Hebrew psalms and prayers could rise freely to Heaven, not smothered in secret rooms behind closed doors.

His Happiness at First.

But it was not long before Da Costa's impetuous spirit began to lose some of its first ardent rapture. He had expected to find in Amsterdam a Jewish community living in Biblical simplicity, according to the fundamental principles of the Law of Moses. He thought that here he should see men actuated by the broad humanity of the Hebrew prophets. Instead he found the Dutch Jews regulating the most minute details of their lives by a multitude of Talmudical laws. He saw what to him seemed a puzzling, irksome network of ceremonial, cast over the simplest actions,—eating, drinking, washing, dressing, working. He could not understand that the Jews of Amsterdam found their lives hallowed and bound daily anew to God by these household rules and humble rites that he disliked. This ritual was endeared to most of them by the most sacred childhood associations with parents long since dead,—tortured, perhaps martyred, for their constancy to the faith which their children could now, in a happier land, practise in peace and in comfort. Da Costa had in his

His Disappointment.

heart no all-embracing human sympathy which would have given him the power to interpret this different attitude towards God and duty. He felt that the great sacrifice he had made for his convictions gave him the right to express his opinions freely, to protest vehemently against the gap that seemed to him to stretch between the Biblical Judaism of his dreams and aspirations, and this rabbinical Judaism of the New Jerusalem. And on their side, the Amsterdam Jews were unable to comprehend this fiery enthusiast, who had come to them to share their faith, and who now seemed to speak of it so scornfully. The memory of what their religion had cost them and their fathers was too vivid in their minds for them to permit this rash intruder to attack the least of its precepts.

His Excommunication.

Unfortunately, the land of the Inquisition, through long centuries of persecution, had taught them a terrible, un-Jewish way of dealing with those who differed with them in belief. The rabbis threatened Da Costa with the dread punishment of excommunication. But even this did not silence him, and so, not without frequent warning, the synagogue at last solemnly thrust out this erring son. No man, woman, or child was to speak a word to him. His own mother and brothers were to shun him. He was to be cut off from all mankind. In the great alien city he stood alone.

His Imprisonment.

There was still left to Da Costa, however, his pen. He would write a book so that all the world should know the glaring contrast between the Judaism of the Dutch Jews and the religion of the Bible. Especially would he point out that this Judaism of theirs was concerned with the body alone, and not with the soul; that it taught nothing as to immortality. The Jews of Amsterdam learned that Da Costa was preparing an attack upon them, and one of them anticipated it by publishing a book on the immortality of the soul, in which he reproached

Da Costa with declaring that the soul is not immortal. Uriel, in his reply, called the accusation false, and yet he showed that his mind was very uncertain about the whole matter. Further study of the Pentateuch had shown him that Moses himself nowhere mentioned immortality, and so Da Costa's book left him convicted of denying the future life. Now the alarmed rabbis appealed to the city magistrates. They charged Da Costa with being guilty of an offense not against Judaism alone, but against Christianity as well, for immortality of the soul is a teaching of both faiths. Uriel was arrested, condemned to pay a fine, and kept in prison for several days. His book was burned. These humiliations he felt keenly, and his heart was hot with anger against those who had so shamed him.

His Desire for Reconciliation.

Yet as year followed year, his lonely life, without intercourse with any fellow-creature, became unbearable. By this time he had fallen away entirely from Judaism, but he felt so great a yearning for human companionship, especially for speech with his brother, that he was at last eager for reconciliation. He would live a lie. He would profess Judaism with his lips, although he no longer felt sympathy with it in his heart. To use his own bitter words, he would be "an ape among apes."

The Second Lapse.

But his peace with the synagogue did not last long. His passionate nature again brought him into open conflict with the Jews of Amsterdam. Again he broke the laws that he had promised to obey—broke them defiantly and impenitently. Then came the climax. It reached the ears of the rabbis that two Christians who had come to Uriel to seek advice about attaching themselves to Judaism had been warned to beware of the intolerable yoke of the synagogue. Again Uriel da Costa was excommunicated. Again he dragged out the terrible, lonely years, shunned by all, even his name never mentioned. Again he

craved companionship, and again he came to the synagogue seeking forgiveness.

The Scene in the Synagogue.

But this time the rabbis were not willing to be made so easily the victims of hypocrisy. Uriel must testify to his sincerity. And here the rabbis, influenced by that Inquisition in whose shadow they had dwelt so many years, unhappily imitated its gloomy forms and devised for Uriel a humiliating penance. In the great synagogue, densely filled with men and women, he must read a long confession of his sins and promise to live till death a true Jew. Then, stripped to the waist, he must receive upon his back thirty-nine lashes with a scourge. And last, he must stretch himself across the threshold of the synagogue and let the congregation pass out over his prostrate body.

Its Effect.

The disgrace of this terrible scene shook Uriel to the depths of his soul. He could not be expected to see that those who persecuted him were themselves the victims, the unwilling pupils, of centuries of just such grim discipline—and worse. He went from the synagogue, his one desire a longing for revenge and then—death. He would show the world what manner of men were these Jews: he would tell the tragic story of his broken life.

"A Specimen of Human Life."

And so his "Exemplar Humanae Vitae," "A Specimen of Human Life," is a series of furious attacks upon Jews and Judaism. When he had finished it, he put an end to his troubled life. He had been neither a heroic man nor a wise thinker, but his last desperate act won for his rash, suffering soul the sympathetic attention that he desired, and served to put in the wrong in the eyes of the world the Jews of seventeenth century Amsterdam, whose patience he had so sorely tried.

Once again were the Jews of Amsterdam to have their hearts wrung by one from whom they had expected nothing but loyalty and love. But Baruch Spinoza was a man very

Spinoza—*Ernest Bruce Haswell.*

different from the unhappy Uriel da Costa. His parents had fled from Spain to kindly Amsterdam, and there, in 1632, the child was born, whom they called Baruch, the "Blessed." The boy learned what his God-fearing parents could teach him of the tragic history of his race and the undying faith that is the heritage of the children of Israel. In the Jewish school in Amsterdam, where Manasseh ben Israel was one of his teachers, he studied Bible and Talmud and rabbinical literature. Eagerly he applied himself to the works of the Jewish religious philosophers of the Middle Ages, especially to the writings of Moses Maimonides and Ibn Ezra. A passionate desire for knowledge led him also to the literature of classic antiquity; and, still thirsting to know more and more, he turned with zeal to the study of physics, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and medicine. He became acquainted with the works of Descartes, the thinker who was leading Europe in an attempt to found philosophy, not on tradition, but on reason. So Spinoza acquired unusual learning, and so his mind, influenced by the thoroughness and mathematical precision of his studies, came to set up as its only guide the human intellect, the reasoning power of man.

Baruch Spinoza.

His ardent desire for truth in all things, at all cost, led him to apply this standard to his religion, to the Judaism of his day. He would believe nothing that could not be comprehended by clear thinking conducted according to methods of mathematical accuracy. Tradition should not guide him; his own independent judgment alone he would follow. The torch handed down from one generation of his race to the next, the light that shone from the religious experience of seer and sage, should not illumine his path.

His Independent Search for Truth.

And so it was not long before the Jewish community of Amsterdam was again disquieted and alarmed by rumors that the brilliant young scholar, from whom they had hoped much.

was giving utterance to dangerous opinions. It was reported that Spinoza was indifferent to Judaism, completely estranged from the faith of his fathers; and that far from devoting his unusual ability to the service of the synagogue, as they had hoped, he would direct it against the religion of his parents and of his childhood.

A Menace to the Community.

The Jews of Amsterdam were doubly grieved and concerned. On the one hand, they mourned the loss of a favorite son, well loved in the community. On the other, they feared the harmful influence that so gifted a man could exert on the young. They could not allow doctrines undermining Judaism to be taught to the Jewish youth, and yet they were reluctant to proceed harshly against Baruch Spinoza. The fate of Uriel da Costa, too, was still fresh in their memory, and they dreaded a repetition of his sad story. First, therefore, they exerted every influence to avoid an open break. They admonished the young man to return to his former course of life. They promised him a yearly pension if he would promise to say no word hostile to Judaism. But Spinoza could not live a life that was not in perfect accordance with his convictions. He insisted on full freedom of thought, and speech, and conduct. He continued to express to the Jewish youths of Amsterdam views that were antagonistic to traditional Judaism.

The Effort towards Reconciliation.

The situation became daily more tense. There is a story that a fanatic even attempted to rid the community of the dangerous heretic by a dagger-stroke, but this is without historical proof. Reconciliation, however, between Spinoza and the synagogue was no longer to be hoped for. The refugees from Spanish and Portuguese persecution had been patient long enough. Even at the moment when they were pondering the case of this erring son of the synagogue, other children of the ancient

Excommunication.

faith were giving up their lives on the pyres of the Inquisition. And there was still another danger. Spinoza's convictions were in opposition to any creed, Christian as well as Jewish. Were the Jews of Amsterdam to risk the newfound toleration of Holland by seeming to sanction the utterances of this daring young philosopher? He was doubly a source of peril, and accordingly the synagogue proceeded to the final step. Before the open ark, in the presence of the assembled people, Baruch Spinoza was excommunicated. Nor did the matter end with excommunication. At the petition of the representatives of the Jewish community the civic authorities banished Spinoza from Amsterdam.

Philosopher and Grinder of Lenses.

Cut off from his father, from all his family, from the friends of his youth, Spinoza still had a refuge and a consolation in the world of thought. Quietly he went on with his studies and his inquiries. To support himself, he set to work, like the old rabbis whom he had disavowed, to learn a handicraft, so that he might keep his pursuit of the truth a labor of love, and not jeopardize his independence of thought. He chose a handicraft which he could follow in connection with his mathematical and scientific studies, one which at his time not a few scholars followed, the grinding of lenses for glasses, microscopes, and telescopes. At this he gained great dexterity, and so he turned out his lenses and lived modestly on the proceeds of his labor, while his mind was searching for an answer to the problems of the universe. In a poor little house on a quiet village street he wrote words that will never die, words that have had a profound influence on the thought of the whole world. In his own day his system of philosophy was condemned as atheistic, "godless," and the circulation of his books was forbidden. Since his death, however, men have seen that Spinoza took with him from his father's house and his father's people a deep

religious feeling, and that he found the source of all wisdom and all happiness only in the knowledge of God.

His Philosophy.

According to his philosophy, the whole universe is only an infinite succession of forms in which God reveals Himself. The name that Spinoza gives to God is the universal "Substance." God expresses Himself also in the inner world of thought, which is as real as the material world. Through man as through nature God works His will. The highest virtue is passive submission to the all-pervading law. These thoughts Spinoza expressed in works that have gained him a place among the master-thinkers of all time: his "Theologico-Political Treatise," in which his object was to convince the nations that freedom of thought can be permitted without danger to religion or to the peace of the state; and his "Ethics," in which he taught that happiness and freedom for mankind can be reached only through submission to the will of God.

But this is a cold and comfortless philosophy. It is submissive, not active. It is the philosophy of the serene onlooker, not of the hero in the great battle of life. Judaism lays down directly opposite principles; it emphasizes, not man's submission, but his freedom to choose; it regards man, not as a creature, but as a child of God.

His Attitude towards Judaism.

In spite of his usual clearness of vision, moreover, and the habitual serenity of his mind, Spinoza's experience had embittered him, and his resentment against the Amsterdam Jews who had excommunicated him colored his attitude towards the whole Jewish people and Judaism. Yet he recorded his admiration of the moral greatness of the prophets and the pure democratic equality of the Jewish state, which he held up as a model for all states.

It is rather in his life than in his philosophy that Spinoza showed his kinship with the Jewish sages whom he studied in his youth. Far from all Jewish associations, his life still

shone with the virtues that his Jewish forefathers held dear,—the warm heart which made his humble neighbors his friends, the quick sympathy with the needy and the sorrowful, the peace of soul in poverty and sickness, the modesty, the mildness, the self-control, the steadfast will which kept him faithful to the truth as he saw the truth. When his father died, his sisters denied the right of the excommunicated brother to his share of the small inheritance. Spinoza considered it his duty to prove his legal right. But when he had forced his sisters to acknowledge his claim, he refused to profit by it. For him money held no joy; he freely gave it back to them. When a devoted pupil, knowing himself doomed to die young, wished to make Spinoza his heir, the philosopher persuaded him not to put aside the rightful claim of his own kindred. And when the young man died, and his grateful heir desired to settle an annual income upon Spinoza, he refused this also, only consenting at last, after much persuasion, to a small allowance. An offer of the chair of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg he declined, fearing that it would curb his freedom of thought and expression.

His Character.

Spinoza's philosophy had no influence on Jewish thought; yet he had learned much from Jewish thinkers. His life was ruled by convictions that lay outside any creed; yet he owed much to his Jewish heritage. His character drew not a little of its unassuming friendliness, its quiet heroism, and its unswerving uprightness from the race to whose strength and beauty of soul he was sometimes blind. And the mediaeval philosophers of his student days, Moses Maimonides and Ibn Ezra, trained his mind for the daring flights of thought on which it was later to venture.

His Relation to Jewish Thinkers.

For our present purposes, however, we are less interested in Spinoza, great as he was, than in the Jews who felt it necessary to sever his connection with the community. We

have seen in them the unwilling pupils of a persecuting age, and in their over-zealous defense of their religion a natural, although deplorable effect of their terrible sufferings for its sake. With their tragic memories, the victims of Spanish tyranny prized so highly their new gift of freedom to hold to their religion in the sight of all men, that we have found them bitterly resentful of any departure from the tenets of their ancestral faith. And it is this jealous watchfulness that brings into prominence in our history these two men who otherwise had no influence on the development of Judaism.

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XXIV.

MOSES MENDELSSOHN.

Even in the enlightened eighteenth century, the story of the suffering of the Jews for their faith was not ended.

The Eighteenth Century.

The stake and the rack were, it is true, losing their popularity as proper instruments for handling unbelievers; but the Jews were still, in most of the countries of Europe, an outcast race. Only in Holland and in England did they enjoy comparative freedom. Everywhere else, especially in German-speaking countries, they were hooted at and stoned in the streets, hemmed in by the walls of the ghetto, excluded from agriculture, the trades, and the professions, barred from the universities, denied public office, forced into mean occupations.

All this persecution left its mark on the mind and the soul. With no means to defend himself against the overwhelming numbers of his oppressors, the Jew bowed his head and slunk in the shadows: in obscurity he avoided unnecessary risk. And with his dignity of bearing went his pride in his personal appearance. The Jew had gone into the ghetto refined in manner, scrupulously careful in all details of dress and personal cleanliness, precise and cultured in speech. It took three centuries of the "ghetto's plague," "the garb's disgrace" to make him indifferent to his appearance, careless in his speech.

The Effects of Persecution.

"The heaviest burden that men can lay on us," Spinoza

had said, "is not that they persecute us with their hatred and scorn, but that they thus plant hatred and scorn in our souls." The Jew of the early Middle Ages had been broadly tolerant. "Christians are not idolators" was the burden of many Jewish utterances; "they make mention of Jesus, but their thought is to the Maker of heaven and earth." Maimonides, fleeing for his life from the persecuting Moslems of Cordova, still could say, "The teachings of Jesus, and of Mohammed who arose after him, help to bring about the looked-for time of the perfection of all mankind, so that all may serve God with one consent. For since the whole world is thus full of the words of the Messiah, of the words of the Holy Writ and the Commandments—these words have spread to the ends of the earth, even if any man deny the binding character of them now. And when the Messiah comes, all will return from their errors." In those times the Jews had always had an open mind for the currents of thought in the world about them. They had taken to themselves what was best in Greek thought and Mohammedan philosophy. The great scholars of Spain had been men of broad culture. They had wanted to know all that the sciences could teach them, all that was being accomplished in their own time. And this culture they had not kept to themselves; they had played a large part in spreading the thought of the Greeks and the Mohammedans, to say nothing of their own Hebrew heritage, throughout Christian Europe.

The Tolerance of the Mediaeval Jew.

But the Jew of the Middle Ages had beheld the Christian in his ugliest aspects,—in pillage and massacre, in injustice and inhumanity. It is only natural that the ordinary Jew came to reciprocate the feelings with which he was regarded, that he gave scorn for scorn, that he profoundly distrusted the culture of the oppressor. To all free exchange of thought, too, the ghetto had put an end. Denied all contact

The Acquired Intolerance of the Jew of the Eighteenth Century.

Moses Mendelssohn.

with the outside world, the Jews naturally lost touch with the movements of their time. Driven in so long upon themselves, they came to find their own resources all-satisfying. They no longer wished to share the thoughts of a civilization which they beheld at its worst,—in its violent persecutions and its cramping, crippling, maddening restrictions.

This was the state of the Jews of Europe when, in 1743, there knocked upon the Jews' Gate of Berlin a weakly lad.

Moses Mendelssohn.

For five days the boy had painfully trudged the weary miles that lay between Dessau, his birthplace, and Berlin, the city of his dreams. The watchman at the gate, whose duty it was to refuse admission to wayfarers without means of support, was inclined to turn the shabby little hunchback harshly away. Fortunately the boy managed to stammer out bashfully that he knew David Frankel, the rabbi of Berlin, who had shortly before been called from Dessau, and that he wished to enroll himself as a pupil in the rabbi's classes. This was a kind of recommendation, and the watchman permitted the lad to enter Berlin.

Fourteen years before, in 1729, Moses Mendelssohn had been born in a humble house on a poor street in Dessau.

His Childhood in Dessau.

His father, Mendel, was a scribe, and earned a scant livelihood by copying scrolls of the Law. In spite of poverty, however, the parents carefully educated their gifted son. The father was the boy's first teacher, and when he could teach the child no more he sent him to school. There is a story that, on winter mornings, the mother would wrap the frail little student in a great old cloak of her own, and that the father would then carry him, bundled safe from the cold, through the bleak streets to the schoolroom. It was a piece of good fortune for Moses that he soon came into the classes taught by the rabbi himself. David Frankel was a distinguished scholar, especially well acquainted with the treasures of mediaeval

Jewish literature. He not only taught his eager pupil the Bible and the Talmud, but early introduced him to the philosophical commentators. Of these, Maimonides attracted the boy most, exerting a powerful influence on his intellectual development. Maimonides gave the young student what he had given Spinoza a hundred years earlier, the foundation of his own philosophical system. In after years, Mendelssohn often playfully referred to his hump as a legacy from Maimonides. "Maimonides spoilt my figure," he would say, whimsically, "and ruined my digestion; but still I dote on him, for although those long vigils with him weakened my body, they at the same time strengthened my soul: they stunted my stature, but they developed my mind."

A Loving Disciple.

Times were hard in the ghetto, and boys no older or stronger than Moses were eking out the meager family income by peddling, but Moses' love of books was so great and his desire to become a man of learning, like his beloved master, was so strong, that the devoted father was persuaded to let the lad continue his studies. Then David Frankel had accepted the appointment as Chief Rabbi of Berlin. On a hill outside Dessau the little disciple had stood, weeping bitterly. But the kind-hearted rabbi had taken the boy in his arms and had comforted him with the hope that some day they should meet in Berlin. And so the lad had won his parents' reluctant consent, and, some six months later, had set out after his teacher.

His Mode of Life.

"Bread with salt shalt thou eat, water by measure shalt thou drink, upon the hard earth shalt thou sleep, and a life of anxiousness shalt thou live, and labor in the study of the Law." This had been the portion of many a Jewish scholar from the time of Hillel, and now young Moses Mendelssohn faced joyfully the privations of a poor student's life. The good rabbi did what he could for the boy—provided him with his dinner on Sab-

baths and festivals, and induced another kind-hearted Jew to supply two dinners during the week and to let the boy sleep in an attic in his house. The rabbi was able, too, to put the lad in the way of earning a few pennies, by employing him to copy his commentary on the Jerusalem Talmud in the beautiful handwriting which Moses inherited from his father, the Torah scribe. With these few coins the boy would buy a loaf of bread, and notch it off into sections, so that hunger might not betray him into eating one day the slice that must be saved for the next. Often he went supperless to bed; but if his body suffered, his mind throve. He continued with Frankel his study of the Talmud and the commentaries, developing especially under the guidance of that other teacher, no less real to the ardent student because separated by centuries: Maimonides' "Guide to the Perplexed" Mendelssohn read again and again.

Forbidden Learning.

But there was still other knowledge for which the young man craved. In spite of the prohibition of the ghetto, he wanted to be a man of broad culture. Nor was he the only young Jew who felt an overpowering desire to know all that the world could teach him. From his scanty earnings he saved money to buy books, denying himself food for his body that he might have food for his mind. These books he brought secretly to his garret, and pored over them while others slept. With a young schoolmaster from Poland he studied mathematics, and a young Jewish physician was his instructor in Latin. He found yet another teacher in a medical student who gave him lessons in French and German and awoke in him a love for good literature.

Better Times.

After seven years of privation and hard work better times came. A rich silk manufacturer, a prominent member of the Berlin congregation, attracted by the young man's diligence, engaged him as tutor for his children. At the home of this kind and cultured man Men-

delssohn found leisure for study. At the end of four years of faithful tutoring, he became his employer's bookkeeper; then, as the years went on, a manager; and at last a partner in the firm. And while he conscientiously fulfilled his duties, he continued his studies. He regretted the hours that he had to spend away from his books, but so long as business did not cool his ardor for learning, he did not complain too bitterly. And his love of study certainly lost none of its youthful fire. Without college or university, without regular instructors, he untiringly made his knowledge broader. In his scant hours of leisure he had by this time learned German, French, English, Latin, and Greek, mathematics and philosophy. History alone had no attraction for him, probably because he could not turn a page of it without being reminded of the sorrows his race had endured for centuries in every land, in no land finding a resting-place. His own resting-place he found in philosophy. In the world of thought he found his true home. Philosophy was his favorite study; and at every period of his life—as pupil in the Talmud school, as tutor, as man of business, as scholar—he turned to it for consolation and for guidance.

"Nathan the Wise."

These cultivated tastes drew Mendelssohn among the intellectual young Jews of Berlin, who met over a game of chess to discuss philosophy and literature. When Gotthold Ephraim Lessing came to Berlin, the two men became acquainted. Lessing, the most liberal of German authors, the most uncompromising foe of every form of intolerance, was not ashamed to associate with the despised Jews. He had already shown, in his drama, "The Jews," his belief that an outcast Jew could be unselfish and noble, and now between the Jew and the Christian an intimate and life-long friendship began, which influenced both men profoundly. It gave Lessing a model for the ideal character of the Jew in his great drama, "Nathan the Wise." Lessing's hero is a man of sorrows, sorely per-

secuted. His wife and seven sons have all been slain by the Crusaders in the massacre of the Jews of Jerusalem. Yet Nathan can take to his home and to his heart the little Christian girl, the orphaned Recha, and bring her up with loving care. At the wealth of this good man the Sultan, Saladin, in sore need of money, casts covetous eyes. He will entrap the Jew by putting to him a question which he can not answer without falling into the power of the sultan: Which of the three religions is the true one—the Jewish, the Mohammedan, or the Christian?

The Story of the Rings.

But Nathan the good is also Nathan the Wise, and he asks permission to tell the sultan a story. He tells of a ring of miraculous power; it has the gift of rendering its possessor beloved of God and man, provided he wear it with perfect faith. This ring belongs to the father of three sons, all of whom he loves equally well, so that he can not bear the thought of giving the precious jewel to one and not to the others. Accordingly he has two other rings made so exactly like the original ring that he himself can scarcely distinguish among them. To each son he gives a ring. After the father's death, however, each son declares that his ring is the true ring, and at last the quarrel grows vehement and the brothers bring it to a judge. The wise man rebukes them for their strife and counsels them, "Let each of you vie with the other two to manifest the magic of the gem in his own ring by gentleness, concord, benevolence, and zeal in the service of God." He points to a time in the far distant future when a wiser Judge will render the final decision.

The Triumph of the Jew.

Saladin recognizes the truth of the parable, and is completely won over by the wisdom and the tolerance of the Jew. Indeed, Christian as well as Mohammedan has to acknowledge the Jew's wider view. Even the hot-headed young Templar is influenced, and his arrogant prejudice against the Jews vanishes when he

comes to know Nathan. All abandon their hostility, and the end of the play sees them all united with the Jew in bonds of harmony and peace.

The Demand of Justice for the Jew.

This Nathan, mild, calm, modest, broad-minded, a noble contrast to the fanatical Christians of the drama, the preacher of a tolerance born of love for all, is Lessing's picture of his friend, Moses Mendelssohn. And thus, on behalf of the people to whom his friend belonged, Lessing bravely faced the furious intolerance of his time and boldly demanded justice for the Jew.

Mendelssohn in German Literary Circles.

And Lessing did much to draw out Mendelssohn himself. Through the great dramatist, the Jew was introduced into the circle of the literary men of Germany, and lost some of the shyness and the awkwardness of the ghetto. His appearance was not such as to make him at ease in society. He was a hunchback; he stuttered. Only the noble forehead and the glowing eyes betrayed the soul of the thinker. Lessing encouraged him, too, to put his philosophical studies into writing. And Mendelssohn now devoted himself to acquiring an attractive German style. He was a Jew, but he was a German also; and as a German Jew he considered it his right and his duty to speak the language of the country in which he was born. Before he had known Lessing a year, he was able to compose, in excellent German, philosophical treatises which gained him favorable notice from the great men of his day. Indeed, he acquired so remarkable a feeling for the beautiful in German literature that he was recognized by the Germans as a judge in questions of taste. He was invited to join the staff of one of the most important German literary journals, and he soon became the soul of the undertaking.

In this magazine he not only published his own studies, but he also reviewed the latest books. His critical judgment was always sound and impartial. His special aim was to

arouse and strengthen the literary consciousness of the Germans. The homeless Jew sought to awake in the Germans the loyalty that is due to the mother tongue. He reproached them for neglecting their own genius and aping French culture. He, the barely tolerated Jew, dared criticise adversely even the poems of so exalted a personage as Frederick the Great. A courtier, shocked at such audacity, denounced the Jew as having "thrown aside all reverence for the most sacred person of His Majesty in insolent criticism of his poetry." The luckless critic was summoned to the king's palace to answer for his offense. But his adroit answer disarmed the king of his wrath. "He who makes verses," said Mendelssohn, "plays at ninepins, and he who plays at ninepins, be he monarch or peasant, must be satisfied with the judgment of the boy who has charge of the bowls as to the merit of his playing." It was probably this incident, however, which led Frederick to withhold from Mendelssohn for a long time the privilege of being a "protected Jew." For Mendelssohn was not a born Prussian, and so, according to the humiliating law, he could stay in Prussia only while he was under the protection of a Prussian Jew. A cultivated Frenchman at Frederick's court, who knew Mendelssohn well, was astounded to learn that Jews of Mendelssohn's type could be driven from the city. He could not believe that so learned a man, so highly honored by all right-minded people, could be so humiliated. He urged Mendelssohn to allow him to present to the king a petition that Mendelssohn be made a "protected Jew." At first Mendelssohn would not hear of it. He could not endure the thought of begging as a favor what should be his right as a law-abiding citizen. Nor did he wish to enjoy a privilege that the humblest and poorest of his co-religionists could not share. At last he submitted, only when he was persuaded that it would be for the good of his family. And

A Critic of the Poetry of a King.

then came the long, humiliating wait upon the good pleasure of the king.

In his thirty-third year Mendelssohn had married, and then began an ideally happy married life. It began modestly enough in a little house, the main furniture of which was twenty china apes, life-size. This was no matter of choice on the part of the newly married couple; it was one of the vexatious extra taxes imposed upon the Jews of Prussia. Every Jewish bridegroom was obliged to purchase a large quantity of china for the support of the king's manufactory; and he had to take, too, what the manufactory wished to sell. In spite of its grotesque ornaments, however, the modest home soon became a meeting-place for the cultured world of Berlin. Poets and scholars, publishers and diplomats, sought Mendelssohn out. A distinguished writer tells a story of what happened when he was one of a great many guests at Mendelssohn's house. As darkness fell, that winter afternoon, the guests missed Mendelssohn and his wife from the room. Suddenly, through an open door, the visitors saw in an adjoining room the gleam of the Sabbath candles, and Frau Mendelssohn pronouncing the blessing over them. A holy awe came over the guests when they saw the great philosopher, whose spirit soared to the heights and plumbed the profoundest depths of thought, bowed in humility before his God.

The Married Life of Mendelssohn.

Honors poured in upon him. When the Berlin Academy offered a prize for an essay upon the question, "Are metaphysical truths susceptible of mathematical demonstration?" Mendelssohn set to work on the problem, so modestly that he wished to withdraw when he learned of the brilliant scholars who were competing. Yet his work won the prize, although one of the contestants was Kant, later to become the world-famous philosopher.

A Prize Winner.

Mendelssohn won still greater renown from his book, "Phaedon, or the Immortality of the Soul," written to an-

"The German Plato."

swer the doubts of the skeptical eighteenth century, and to restore to the cultured world its belief in the after-life. It was to be a popular work, and so Mendelssohn chose for it the attractive form which the Greek philosopher Plato had used, the dialogue. He represented Socrates, in his last hours, discoursing upon the reasons for the belief in immortality. In the first part of his book he merely translated Plato, but he then went on to set forth all that religion, reason, and experience teach in support of a belief in immortality. For a philosophical work the "Phaedon" had unparalleled success. In less than two years it ran through three German editions, and within ten years it had been translated into English, French, Dutch, Italian, Danish, and Hebrew. From all sides, from priests and preachers, from philosophers, poets, statesmen, and princes came recognition and gratitude. Men and women thanked the Jew for carrying conviction to their hearts and freeing their souls from doubt and despair. They called him the "German Plato" and the "Socrates of the eighteenth century." No visitor of importance who came to Berlin failed to pay his respects to the great celebrity. Acknowledgment of Mendelssohn's high standing as a German author came from the Royal Academy of Berlin, which extended to him the most exalted reward to which a German man of learning could aspire, an invitation to become a member of this august body. But twice the application was rejected by the king for no other reason than that Mendelssohn was a Jew. Yet the prejudice that Jews were hopelessly ignorant, forever incapable of acquiring culture, although not destroyed, had been shaken.

Among those who testified to their admiration of Mendelssohn was a zealous minister of Zurich, Lavater, whose enthusiasm, however, took a form that was most painful to the peace-loving philosopher. Lavater dedicated to Mendelssohn a translation which he

Religious Controversy.

had made of a French work, "Evidences of Christianity," and he solemnly adjured the Jewish sage to read it impartially and either refute it publicly or else, if he found it convincing, to do "what Socrates would have done, had he read the work and found it unanswerable." It was a most distressing situation for the Jew. Plain speaking against the dominant religion would not, it is true, bring the speaker to the stake or drive him into exile, as in an earlier day, but it might render still more precarious the uncomfortable position of the Jews in Germany. Yet even the mild Mendelssohn, who hated all controversy, especially religious disputes, could not be silent. He owed it to his inmost convictions to make a public answer. Definitely, then, he replied to Lavater. He declared that his faith in the principles of his own religion was unshakable. He emphasized his opinion that it is by character and not by controversy that Jews should silence their critics. "The contemptible opinion held of Jews I would desire to shame by virtue, not by controversy. My religion, my philosophy, and my standing in civil life are the weightiest arguments for avoiding all religious discussion." He asserted that Judaism, seeking no proselytes itself, should be safe from the assaults of proselytizers: "I am so fortunate as to count amongst my friends many a worthy man who is not of my faith. Never yet has my heart whispered, 'Alas! for this good man's soul.'" "Why," he asked, "should I convert him? . . . Do I think there is a chance of his being saved? I certainly believe that he who leads mankind on to virtue in this world can not be damned in the next." He refused, then, to criticise "Evidences of Christianity" in detail, but he declared boldly that the arguments in the book could easily be refuted and that they certainly did not cause his convictions to waver. Indeed with so much dignity and self-restraint did he reply that the over-zealous preacher begged his forgiveness for having

placed him in so awkward a position, entreating him to believe that the indiscretion had not been intentional.

The dispute, however, continued, other writers taking it up, and the strain told upon Mendelssohn's sensitive nature and frail physique.

By this time Moses Mendelssohn had become, almost unconsciously, the foremost representative of his race. He was universally honored as man, as writer, as philosopher.

The Influence of Mendelssohn's Character upon Christian Opinion of the Jew.

He enjoyed the friendship of the most prominent and influential men of his time. And this influence he exerted for the betterment of his downtrodden brethren. When Lessing's "Nathan the Wise" appeared, many Christians, arrogantly secure of a monopoly of the virtues because of their belief in Jesus, said that it was altogether too impossible that among a people like the Jews a noble character could be found. But this ideal Jew was now a well-known reality, an ornament not only to the Jewish race, but to the German nation. Through his own personality, good-mannered, scholarly, high-minded, he was doing much to silence opposition and to banish prejudice. And it was just such help as this that his race needed. Mendelssohn's own family keenly felt the sting of intolerance. "In the evening," he wrote, "I go out with my wife and my children. 'Father,' they cry, 'why did that fellow just call at us? Why do they throw stones at us? What have we done to them? They always follow us in the streets and call "Jews! Jews!" Father, is it *wicked* to be a Jew?'" This was the attitude towards the Jew, the attitude that Moses Mendelssohn himself did much to change by his character and his conduct.

He worked directly and actively, too. Often the oppressed Jews of Europe turned to him for help, and they never appealed in vain. From the home of Lavater came the first cry. In "free" Switzerland there were only two places, a half hour's journey apart, where Jews were tolerated, and

when even these Jews were threatened with new and unbearable restrictions, they begged Mendelssohn to intercede for them with the influential Lavater. Distasteful as it was to Mendelssohn to have any further intercourse with the Swiss preacher, he wrote to Lavater, asking him to use his influence for the oppressed Jews; and Lavater was able to procure some recognition of their rights. Again, when several hundred Jews were about to be expelled from Dresden because they could not pay promptly the burdensome and humiliating poll-tax, Mendelssohn interceded successfully for them. At another time the Jews of Alsace, forbidden almost every handicraft and trade; vexatiously hampered in every undertaking; obliged to pay protection-money to the king, tribute to bishop and duke, and residence taxes to the nobles; mulcted for every privilege, looked to Mendelssohn as their only hope in their distress. Now Mendelssohn had a friend and admirer in the statesman, Christian William Dohm. This man Mendelssohn interested in the cause of the Alsatian Jews because he believed that the Christian could, more easily than the Jew, combat Christian prejudice. Dohm drew up a memorial to lay before the French council of state; and while he was at work on this task, the thought struck him that it would be far more helpful if he broadened his plea, and presented it not for the few, but for the many, for all Jews who were suffering under similar oppression. With burning zeal he threw himself generously into the good cause of convincing his contemporaries of the necessity of civic rights for the Jew.

He Intercedes for the Jews with Influential Christians.

Thus originated the first work to discuss scientifically the question of Jewish emancipation, "Upon the Civil Amelioration of the Condition of the Jews" (1781). It is difficult for us to-day to realize the heroism required to speak a word on behalf of the Jews in the face of the overwhelming prejudice against

Christian William Dohm's Work on Jewish Emancipation.

them. Dohm dwelt solely on the political and economic aspect of his question. He pointed out that although governments spent large sums to attract new citizens, an exception was made in the case of the Jews: in almost all parts of Europe, residence was either denied them, or granted at an exorbitant price. "Every guild would think itself dishonored by admitting a Jew as a member; therefore, in almost every country, the Hebrews are disbarred from handicrafts and mechanical arts. Amidst such oppressive circumstances, only men of rare genius retain courage and serenity to devote themselves to the fine arts and the sciences. Even the rare men who attain to a high degree of excellence, as well as those who are an honor to mankind through their irreproachable righteousness, meet with respect only from a few; with the majority the most distinguished merits of soul and heart can never atone for the error of being a Jew." Dohm reviewed the history of the Jews in Europe,—their remarkable culture among the Arabs of Spain, the persecutions they suffered in the Middle Ages. He painted the Christians as cruel barbarians, and the Jews as illustrious martyrs. He urged for the Jews equal rights with other subjects, liberty of occupation, free exercise of their religion. He would deny them only one privilege, public office, fearing that the ability to undertake it would come only with later generations.

It is needless to say that this pamphlet aroused bitter opposition, but scarcely had it appeared when Emperor Joseph of Austria issued a series of laws (1781) permitting the Jews in his dominion to learn handicrafts, arts and sciences, and, under certain restrictions, to follow agriculture. The doors of the universities were thrown open. The irksome body-tax was abolished. All the special imposts which had stamped the Jews as aliens and outcasts were remitted. Complete citizenship they were still denied, nor might they reside in those

A Beginning is Made.

cities from which they had already been banished. Even in Vienna they might not dwell, except in a few cases and on payment of a toleration tax which did not include their grown-up sons. Nor were they suffered to have a single synagogue in Vienna. Still it was a notable beginning. Clergymen, scholars, statesmen, and princes were turning their attention to a serious consideration of the Jewish question.

Naturally hostility was not lacking. Friendship for Judaism stirred up opposition and hatred. In order to answer heated attacks, Mendelssohn induced one of his young friends to translate into German the "Vindiciae Judaeorum" of Manasseh ben Israel. Mendelssohn himself wrote an eloquent preface, in which he pleaded for toleration, for freedom of thought, for the equality of all before the law.

The Preface to "Vindiciae Judaeorum."

Then, further to vindicate the Jewish character and to persuade the governments of Europe of the justice of equal rights for the Jew, Mendelssohn wrote his celebrated "Jerusalem or Upon Ecclesiastical Power and Judaism" (1783). Boldly he urged emancipation of conscience and belief. And as the first necessity for such freedom, he demanded the separation of Church and State. For from the separation of Church and State it would follow that no state has the right to shut out the followers of any religion from the enjoyment of civic rights. The state would exercise upon religion only a general supervision, to see that no doctrines were taught which would interfere with public well-being. And if religious thought were to be free from interference by the state, religion must free itself from any use of the sort of power that may belong to a state, but that certainly is not in harmony with the true spirit of religion: the exercise of the dread authority to excommunicate. Mendelssohn felt strongly that the use of the ban by Church or by Synagogue was contrary to the principle of

"Jerusalem."

that liberty of conscience for which he was so earnestly striving.

Mirabeau, a Champion of the Jews.

Mirabeau, the great French statesman, declared that the "Jerusalem" should be translated into all the languages of Europe. His admiration for its author led him to an interest in all Jews, and he took up their cause with as much warmth as Dohm. In his work, "Upon Mendelssohn and the Political Reform of the Jews" (1787), he reviewed the long, tragic history of the Jews, calling attention to their glorious martyrdom and to the disgrace of their persecutors. He praised the Jews for their virtues, and he traced their failings to the ill-treatment which they had suffered.

Thus Mendelssohn labored for the political emancipation of the Jew, for his recognition as a useful citizen, for his right to stand before the law of the land on the same footing as his Christian neighbor. And thus his courage and his dignity brought to his side powerful Christian friends, who worked with him to right the wrong of centuries.

The Language of the Country.

And while he strove to shatter the ghetto walls from without, he bent his energies to a similar task within. Here, too, were high walls that kept the Jew from a knowledge of what his neighbors on the other side were accomplishing, and that prevented those neighbors from understanding and appreciating the Jew. All about him, for example, he heard the German Jews getting along awkwardly with a clumsy mixture of Hebrew and German, neither the one tongue or the other, but a harsh combination of both. This jargon was not without a certain pathos and power of its own, but Mendelssohn wished the Jews to speak a language that would win understanding and respect from their neighbors; he wished the Jews to understand a language that would open to them the treasures of modern thought. He, who was himself German as well as Jew, wanted to teach the German Jews the German language,

to overcome their prejudice against it as the speech of their oppressors, to persuade them to use it as a key to the culture of the modern world.

His Translations of the Pentateuch and the Psalms.

And in order that he might lead them to become gradually and almost unconsciously familiar with the language that they distrusted, he began by translating into it portions of the one Book that there was the greatest likelihood of their reading in any and every form. He had made for his own children a translation of the Pentateuch and now he published it for all readers. He added to it a commentary in simple Hebrew, in which were given the interpretations of the old rabbinical writers, of Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Nachmanides, and others. In pure German the Jewish youth now read the old familiar stories of the beginnings of Israel's history, and the well-loved tales took on a new interest from the novelty and the beauty of the form in which they now first appeared. The Psalms, too, Mendelssohn put into German. Those rabbis who regarded the reading of any German book as a menace, vehemently opposed the innovation. They feared, not without cause, that the Jewish youth would turn to these translations more to learn German than to gain an understanding of the Bible, and that time would be taken from religious study and given to other subjects. But the young students eagerly read the precious books over and over, and then studied with increasing zeal the few German books on which they could lay their hands. In a wonderfully short time they had mastered the new language and the new literature, and there soon arose a little group of Jewish authors who wrote, not in the Jewish-German dialect, but in pure German.

Mendelssohn's translation had awakened new interest, moreover, not only in the language of the land, but, through its commentary, in the old classic Hebrew which had almost been supplanted by the jargon. Many of his young followers

took pains to cultivate a clear Hebrew style. Particularly interested in Hebrew was Hartwig Wessely, who had been associated with Mendelssohn in the translation of the Pentateuch. Wessely was like Mendelssohn in many respects. Like Mendelssohn, he was largely self-taught. He was like Mendelssohn, too, in his burning love of knowledge, in his eager zeal for the welfare of his brethren, and in his unwavering loyalty to Judaism. He had gained for himself a knowledge of modern languages, of geography, of history. His aim, like Mendelssohn's, was to awake the Jews to a new intellectual life. He, too, sought to substitute a pure and beautiful speech for the jargon, but while Mendelssohn strove to win the Jews for the language of the country in which they lived, Wessely especially desired to hear again the sublime accents of classical Hebrew.

A Renascence of Classical Hebrew.

To realize another of Mendelssohn's aims, Wessely worked with him shoulder to shoulder. Both felt that the limited curriculum of the German-Jewish school was no adequate preparation for the complex society in which the Jew must live and work. Both struggled to overcome the ghetto-born suspicion of alien learning, a suspicion that had not hampered the Jewish mind when the intellect was free, but had fastened itself upon it during the long, cramping years of restriction and humiliation. Mendelssohn succeeded in organizing in Berlin a Jewish school in which not only Bible and Talmud were taught, but also the modern languages and a complete secular course of study. Mendelssohn included the technical branches also, for now that the Jews might hope for the removal of the restrictions that had kept them from agriculture and the industries, he wished to have them ready to reenter these old pursuits so long denied them. Thus he strove to regain for the Jews all that they had lost during their long imprisonment in the ghetto. He longed to have

Secular Subjects for Jewish Schools.

them profit by every good that hostility had withheld from them during the ages of persecution.

The Death of Mendelssohn.

In 1786 Moses Mendelssohn died. Seldom has the death of any man caused such widespread grief. Christians joined with Jews in the general sorrow. The great men of Germany—Herder, Kant, Goethe—testified to their sense of loss. The Jews of Germany knew that their teacher, adviser, leader, representative, was gone. No more would ambitious young Jews, self-conscious and suffering from an agony of shyness, feel those kindly, encouraging eyes upon them, drawing out the best that was in them, assuring them that the great Mendelssohn understood them and respected them. Yes, the Jews would miss him sorely—miss his gentle wit and humor, his open-handed, self-forgetting charity, his generous friendliness.

His Service to his People.

But he had left them much. His influence did not die with him. He had stirred the conscience of the Christians: largely through his labors, political emancipation was gradually to come to the Jews—not quickly or all at once, not without heartbreaking delays and disappointments—slowly, but still surely. And he had roused the Jews to new intellectual life: he had given them one of the languages of modern thought and he had restored to them the language of ancient religious literature. He had thrown open to them the gates of modern culture. Again they were in contact with the larger world.

New Dangers.

But with the new opportunities came new temptations. Flattered by the unaccustomed toleration, many German Jews grew impatient of the slowly widening liberty and longed for the unqualified favor and approval of Christian society, for immediate and complete freedom from all the hampering restrictions. These Jews flung aside the faith of the few and the weak, and accepted the faith of the many and the powerful. Brilliant young men and women who saw the pathways to fame in literature,

music, science—in every calling for which their talents fitted them—still cruelly closed to the Jew but open to the Christian, abandoned the religion which their fathers had not forsaken even on the rack or at the stake.

The weaker sons and daughters of Israel, however, were not representative of the new generation. The great majority of nobler minds and stronger souls attempted to solve the problem with which civil and intellectual emancipation had confronted them. How could they remain good Jews and yet become good citizens of the country in which they lived? How could they hold fast to the essentials of their religion and yet share the thought of the modern world? This question Mendelssohn had not answered: its solution is the task of modern Judaism. The Jews of to-day live the Jewish life in the modern world, not as outcasts in the hemmed-in world of the ghetto, not as aliens in lands of exile, but, for the most part, as free citizens of free countries. The questions raised by Mendelssohn's work as emancipator are still not completely answered. The story of Jewish life and thought from his day to ours is a record of attempts to work out the great problem. The new age finds, as every other age found before it, that Jewish tradition is a living force, not fixed or rigid, but progressive and capable of infinite growth and of adaptation to new requirements. The essentials remain unchanged; what changes is only the interpretation. The interpretation of ages of persecution and restriction merges into the interpretation of an age of freedom and enlightenment.

The Task of Modern Israel.

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ā —as in art	ō —as in go
ă —as in at	ŏ —as in not
ĕ —as in get	ou—as in loud
ā —as in fame	ŭ —as in but
ĭ —as in hit	ū —as in rule
ē,ī—as in greet, police	ī —as in pine

ch—as in doch (German)

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